



NIETZSCHE





# NIETZSCHE

*The Story of a Human Philosopher*

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## PREFACE

THE interest in Nietzsche is great, and his influence has steadily increased since his death. Nor is his appeal confined to people of one kind or of one opinion or party. He was a philosopher, though not of the technical sort, and the problems with which he dealt are problems which come home in some measure to all men, and most of all to those who, like him, have lost their bearings in the modern world. But he was more than a philosopher, he was an artist, and an abnormally sensitive human being, whose answers to the problems which life set him sprang from his very humanity.

This book is an attempt to see the man and his philosophy together, and to interpret them by one another. It does not primarily seek to judge and appraise, to attack or defend; but merely to understand, and by understanding to make clear on what his appeal to us depends.

Both the philosophy and the life are set forth with all the care and accuracy we can command, but signs of erudition have been reduced to a minimum; and in the psychological field, in which much of the study lies, technicalities and the jargon of the schools have been avoided.

References to Nietzsche's own writings have been given in considerable detail in order that the interpretations placed on them may be checked by the context. Quotations from his letters are dated; passages from his published works are, when possible, referred to by paragraph, in order to allow them to be found in any edition of them. For other references the Musarion edition has been used, and the footnotes refer to its volumes and pages.

H. A. R.

CAPE TOWN

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE CHILD	I
II. THE SCHOOLBOY	15
III. THE FRESHMAN	26
IV. THE STUDENT	42
V. SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY	54
VI. MOODS	66
VII. THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR	81
VIII. THE YOUNG PROFESSOR	98
IX. THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY	119
X. GREEK CULTURE	148
XI. REPERCUSSIONS	168
XII. PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS	179
XIII. UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS	193
XIV. CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER	210
XV. WAGNER AT BAYREUTH	224
XVI. ALIENATION	241
XVII. HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN	254
XVIII. THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE	268
XIX. LOU SALOMÉ	285

## NIETZSCHE

	PAGE
XX. THE RETICENT PROPHET	302
XXI. APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION	325
XXII. THE WITHDRAWN SOUL	346
XXIII. THE MAN OF THE MASKS	356
XXIV. THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER	370
XXV. THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER	385
XXVI. GOODNESS	404
XXVII. BADNESS	422
XXVIII. THE IMMORALIST	434
XXIX. THE ANTICHRIST	445
XXX. ANTI-WAGNER	459
XXXI. ECCE HOMO	476
XXXII. DARKNESS	492

# I

## THE CHILD

BORN just before the middle of the nineteenth century in a small country parsonage, Nietzsche was descended on both sides of the house from respected God-fearing Saxon stock, long and closely connected with the Lutheran form of the Christian Church. He wandered far afield from the home and faith of his fathers and spent most of his mature life in foreign lands, where he was only momentarily at home. On his death at the age of fifty-six, some ten years after the light of reason had been extinguished in him, his body was brought back and buried in the graveyard of the small church beside the house where he was born. But the final return, although achieved only at the will of others when the life had gone out of him, may not be so much the mockery it seems as a symbol that he did not find elsewhere the abiding country for which he so earnestly sought.

It is the purpose of this book to trace the path of this wayward genius, and to consider his changing doctrines in their relation to the man himself — to his character and temperament ; for of all the men who have ever been widely accorded the title of philosopher, Nietzsche is he whose doctrines are most closely entwined with his own personal needs, likes, dislikes, powers and insufficiencies. So that in a very profound sense it may be said that he wrote little of importance which was not about himself and a piece of transparent self-revelation. Therein lies his strength and his weakness, his appeal to others, and the peculiar influence he has exerted on the modern world.

We may begin our study in the time-honoured manner by a consideration of the family to which Nietzsche belonged. Doubtless respectability and religious faith are not transmitted by the germ plasm, but they descend in tradition and family



## NIETZSCHE

pride, and to this tradition and pride Nietzsche was unusually sensitive.

Grandfather Nietzsche — Friedrich August Ludwig by name — was a pillar of the Church. A Superintendent in the Lutheran Communion — the equivalent of a Bishop in England — he was a thinker as well as an administrator, and did what he could to establish and maintain the faith. The titles of two of his books will perhaps acquaint us sufficiently with the manner of man he was. These are: *Gamaliel, or the Everlasting Duration of Christianity, calculated to instruct and tranquillize the Public Mind in the face of the Present Ferment in the Theological World* — this was in 1796, two years after the *fête de l'être suprême*; and eight years later, *Contributions towards the Promotion of a Reasonable Attitude regarding Religion, Education, the Duty of the Subject and Human Life*.

This excellent man married twice. By his first wife he had nine children of whom two died in infancy. For a second wife he married a young widow, as well connected as he himself was, and coming from a family of pastors. One of her brothers founded the needle-work and embroidery industry in Saxon Voigtland, another was a country parson, but her favourite was the preacher in the Cathedral at Naumburg, who later became General Superintendent, Doctor of Divinity and Professor, first at Königsberg and then at Weimar. The young widow did not lack courage, for with her husband she took over his seven children, and then bore him three more. The stepchildren are only of indirect importance to our story, and their chief interest lies in the fact that one of them amassed a fortune in England, and, dying a bachelor, left his wealth to his relatives. As a result of this legacy, the members of the family were all raised from the fear of dire poverty, so that in all his vicissitudes Nietzsche was never faced by the spectre of real want.

The three children of the second marriage concern us more. Two were girls, who never married, and later became respectively Aunt Augusta and Aunt Rosalie; the third and youngest was Karl Ludwig, Nietzsche's father. Aunt Augusta is described by her sympathetic niece, Nietzsche's sister, as sweet and patient,

## THE CHILD

though greatly troubled with gastric weaknesses, and as quietly but effectively persistent in obtaining the control of household affairs. Rosalie on the other hand devoted herself to affairs of the spirit, and took a profound interest in Christian benevolent institutions. She was learned for her sex and age in matters of theology, and had some acquaintance with science and politics.

Nietzsche's father, born on 10th October 1813, was educated in a seminary at Rossleben. He early showed musical talent, and issued tickets for concerts which he himself gave on Sundays after morning church. He was an excellent impromptu player on the piano, and wrote some compositions which have not survived. After some experience as a tutor, he became attached to the ducal court of Altenburg and was put in charge of the education of three young princesses. Later on, being brought into contact with Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, he obtained through this monarch's good graces the living at a small village in Prussian Saxony, called Röcken.

The Nietzsche household was proud of its traditions and its refinement. At the very lowest estimate it was an extremely respectable family, but it had higher aspirations than this. So there was cherished, particularly by the two girls, Augusta and Rosalie, the legend that in the direct ancestral line, not too far back, there was a delightfully mysterious handsome adventurous Polish count, who left Poland for religion's sake. This touch of nobility, and the infusion of foreign blood, lifted them in their own eyes above their more common neighbours and made them a family apart. The story had little truth in it, but as we shall see, it agreed with Nietzsche's own humour, and he took it seriously.

When Karl Ludwig entered upon his pastoral duties at Röcken, his two sisters seem to have looked after him, and his mother probably stayed with him, at least for the greater part of the year. But he looked around for a wife of his own, and soon found one in another household almost equally respectable, though possessed of a different outlook on life. Nietzsche's maternal grandfather, Ochler, was a country parson at a small

## NIETZSCHE

Saxon village, Pobles, but he had married a lady of some means, and reared a large cheery noisy family. He himself was a warm-hearted sensible man of the world, interested in things around him, with a fair amount of common sense and a strong hold on life. He hunted, played cards, encouraged amateur theatricals and, though no adept, was fond of listening to music. Of his eleven spirited, wilful and somewhat headstrong children, Fränschen was the youngest, and at the age of seventeen she was led by the young parson of Röcken to his home as his bride.

The arrangement there was by no means ideal. The two Nietzsche ladies, Augusta and Rosalie, were already firmly established in the parsonage, Augusta managing the household affairs, and Rosalie attending to things of the spirit. They duly welcomed the young wife, but they intended to remain where they were and did not propose to hand over the reins of office to the newcomer. The bridegroom was a man of no decision, and left his bride to adapt herself to the difficult situation, but the experience left a mark on her.

For the most part, however, life flowed peacefully at Röcken, and in 1844, a year after the marriage, a son was born to the young couple, the precise date being the 15th October, the birthday of the king of Prussia, the parson's benefactor. At the christening ceremony the full heart of the young father overflowed.

"Thou blessed month of October," he exclaimed, "for many years the most decisive events of my life have occurred within thy thirty-one days, but my experience this day is the greatest and most glorious of them all, the christening of my little child. O blissful moment! O exquisite festival! O unspeakable holy duty! In the name of the Lord I bless thee! From the bottom of my heart do I utter these words: Bring me, then, this my beloved child, that I may consecrate him to the Lord! My son, Friedrich Wilhelm, thus shalt thou be named on earth, in honour of my royal benefactor on whose birthday thou wast born."<sup>1</sup>

About two years later, in July 1846, there followed a girl,

<sup>1</sup> Förster-Nietzsche, *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 14.

## THE CHILD

Elizabeth, who later became Nietzsche's admiring worshipper and biographer, and finally in February 1848 another boy, Joseph. The household did not long remain intact. In August 1848, before Nietzsche's fourth birthday, the father had an unfortunate fall; it precipitated a cerebral trouble from which he never fully recovered, and eleven months later he died. His death was followed in February 1850 by that of his younger son, Joseph, barely two years old.

It is difficult to say how much Nietzsche remembered of the first environment into which he was cast. The family did not leave the parsonage until April 1850, when Nietzsche was five and a half years old, but he was only four years and nine months of age when his father died, and during the last year of that time his contact with his father was intermittent. Nevertheless it may help us to understand our subject if we cast a quick glance at the household at Röcken.

The dominating figures are the two aunts, the managers and administrators. The young mother, probably made slightly conscious of her youth and lesser refinement — she had a much stronger digestion than the other two ladies and a more vigorous physical constitution — subdued herself as well as she was able, though she sometimes found time hanging heavily on her hands. Occasionally she broke into protest. Her husband, however, gave her little support. In person he was tall and slender, and was credited with a noble and poetic personality. Full of reverence for his family, he displayed the most refined and distinguished manners. His beautiful brown eyes, which unfortunately were short-sighted, gave him a romantic look, and he easily lost himself in music. A sensitive soul, he took the mishaps of life extremely to heart. His daughter tells us that any sign of discord either in his parish or in his own family was so painful to him that he would withdraw to his study and refuse to eat and drink, or to speak with anybody. If any trifling dispute chanced to occur in his presence between his dominating sister Rosalie and his fiery young wife, he would lean back in his chair, close his eyes, and become absorbed in very different thoughts, so that

## NIETZSCHE

he might hear and see nothing of the quarrel. The Revolution of 1848, it is said, was an unspeakable sorrow to him. When he read in the papers that his beloved King, Friedrich Wilhelm, had driven round Berlin with a cockade in his hat he burst into passionate tears, and could only return to his family after having spent several hours alone ; and no one was allowed to mention the event to him again.<sup>1</sup>

The affairs of this somewhat unbalanced household were further complicated by the presence during the greater part of the year of Grandmother Nietzsche. What part she played in its economy at this time is not recorded ; but from her character it must have been a considerable one.

The young father spent much of his time with his children, especially with Fritz, who early developed the capacity for sitting still when his father was working, and who could be soothed and made to cease crying by his father's music. For a little time after his accident in August 1848, the father was able to return to duty, to write sermons and take confirmation classes, and in the spring of the next year he began to give his son a few lessons. But his recovery was only temporary and spasmodic ; the brain trouble gradually increased, until in July 1849 he died.

In his will the pastor appointed one of his relatives, a lawyer named Dächsel, guardian of his children, but his mother, Grandmother Nietzsche, took active charge of the household, and after some eight months removed it, now further reduced by the death of Joseph, to Naumburg an der Saale, where she had lived before her marriage and where she had many friends and acquaintances of the proper kind. The old lady did not often go out of doors, but she kept court at home and entertained many visitors, drawn chiefly from high legal circles, at that time the dominating influence in the social life of the town.

Grandmother Nietzsche had views of her own on education, and decided that Fritz should be sent to the local Municipal Boys' School, where he would mix with all and sundry. The experi-

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 18.

## THE CHILD

ment, however, was not a success : both the boy's nature and his training were against it. Nothing had prepared him for contact with those who took life crudely. He had lived mainly in a world controlled by women — and was to continue to do so for some years — and the only man he had had much acquaintance with, his father, had seemed to be made, not of the common clay, but of a finer, though more brittle, porcelain. Young Fritz Nietzsche, even at the age of six, was preoccupied with things inside his own mind and had no ready feeling for the demands of an environment which had not been made to his own prescription. At the age of fourteen the precocious child wrote an autobiography, and in it he gives an account of a prophetic dream, said to have occurred after his father's death, presaging the death of his brother Joseph. How far the recollection is accurate it is difficult to say, and the whole tale is perhaps more valuable for the light it throws on Nietzsche at the time he wrote it ; but presumably it had some basis in fact, and indicates a phase of his nature. Here it is :

“ I dreamt that I heard the sound of the church organ playing a requiem. When I looked to see what the cause of it was, a grave suddenly opened and my father in his shroud arose out of it. He hurried into the church and in a moment or two appeared with a small child in his arms. The grave opened, he stepped into it and the gravestone fell once more over the opening. The sound of the organ immediately ceased and I awoke. In the morning I related the dream to my dear mother ; very shortly afterwards little Joseph became unwell, fell into convulsions, and died in a few hours. Our sorrow was indescribable. My dream had been completely fulfilled.”<sup>1</sup>

Young Fritz lived in a different world from that of the boys alongside whom he was placed — a more internal and self-centred world. He was serious, thoughtful, careful of his manners ; he recited Bible texts and hymns with great feeling, and thereby impressed the young barbarians around him. They did not understand him nor did he them. They were in the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

## NIETZSCHE

majority and constituted his environment, but he failed to adapt himself to them ; so they teased him, and laughed at his priggish ways, but otherwise left him to his own devices. To Nietzsche the world was always a strange unsympathetic affair, not at all well behaved, not at all rational — in the sense in which he understood rationality ; and even at this early stage we get a glimpse of the gap that existed for him between his outlook on life, his rules of life and the needs of life itself. “ One day,” his sister tells us, “ just as school was over, there was a heavy down-pour of rain, and we looked along the Priestergasse for our Fritz. All the boys were running like mad to their homes — at last little Fritz also appeared, walking slowly along, with his cap covering his slate, and his little handkerchief covering the whole. Mamma waved and called to him when he was some way off : ‘ Run, child, run ! ’ The sheets of rain prevented us from catching his reply. When our mother remonstrated with him for coming home soaked to the skin, he replied seriously : ‘ But, Mamma, in the rules of the school it is written : on leaving the school, boys are forbidden to jump and run about in the streets, but must walk quietly and decorously to their homes. ’ ”<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche’s mother worried, not unnaturally, about the oddness of her boy, and complained to her father, Grandfather Oehler, of the child’s inability to make friends easily. Grandfather Oehler, himself more a man of the world than most of Nietzsche’s other relatives, soothed her, telling her that her ugly duckling might well turn out a swan ; that he was an unusually able and talented boy, and should not be expected to conform too closely to the ways of more ordinary mortals. Accordingly, Nietzsche was allowed to develop in his own way, and was left freer than usual from rules and prescriptions.

The Municipal School, however, obviously would not do : the boy was unhappy ; so, Grandmother Nietzsche’s theories notwithstanding, he was taken away from it and sent to a more select establishment, which prepared children for entry to the

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 28 f.

## THE CHILD

Cathedral Grammar School. Two years later he entered the Grammar School itself. Meanwhile Fritz had made two friends, Wilhelm Pinder and Gustav Krug, grandchildren of one of Grandmother Nietzsche's legal acquaintances. With them Nietzsche was at home, he understood them and could dominate them, and as they also attended the preparatory school, Nietzsche became less lonely and isolated.

To Nietzsche himself the change to the Grammar School meant much. He was eight years old, and probably at the outset he was a little afraid of the small new world. When he found it more friendly than he expected, his self-esteem expanded swiftly. His sister, who had hitherto shared much of life with him, now became in his eyes merely a little girl, whereas he, if not yet a man, was well on the way to becoming one. "He would no longer allow the servant", his sister tells us, "to fetch him from friends' houses at night. If we were both invited, and our good Minna in the natural course of events came to fetch me, Fritz would leave us womenfolk and always walk five paces ahead, and pretend not to belong to us."<sup>1</sup> When the servant was not there, however, he constituted himself guard and protector of his young sister against the terrors of the world, such as the horses and dogs to be found in the street.

During this period of his boyhood, Nietzsche spent many of his holidays with his grandparents Oehler at Pobles. Here the family pride and refinement were perhaps not so much an obsession as at Naumburg, and Nietzsche and his sister led a more natural existence. They wore old clothes and were allowed to become as dirty as they liked. Most of the time was spent out of doors, in the fields, the woods and the orchards, sometimes in the company of the grandfather himself. The two children, Elizabeth says, revelled in freedom and independence and even ran a little wild; but she is constrained to admit that the wildness was of a very tame variety, and that they were "extraordinarily good children, perfect little models".

In Naumburg itself, during the whole of Nietzsche's early

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.



## NIETZSCHE

boyhood, the atmosphere in which he lived was somewhat artificial and might even be described as that of a cultural forcing-house.

All the recognised features of the good life were provided in it, though not always in the most usual manner. The home was deeply religious ; the family tradition, Grandmother Nietzsche, and perhaps Aunt Rosalie, saw to that. But there was nothing common or vulgar about the religion. In the person of Grandmother Nietzsche, it turned away with some disdain from " the orthodox revival of the fifties ", says Elizabeth, " when people were beginning to be ' born again ' and to denounce themselves as desperate sinners " and showed itself rather in " a delicate and touching piety ".<sup>1</sup> So strong was this influence that Nietzsche many years afterwards was able to write that at twelve years of age he saw God in all His glory.

The moral standard also was exceedingly high. All the proper virtues were inculcated by word and example ; again perhaps not on the common grounds which might apply to all humanity, but for more select reasons ; immoral behaviour, such as lying, was undignified ; and the family attitude was summed up by one of the aunts who declared " with calm pride : ' We Nietzsches scorn to lie ' ".<sup>2</sup>

After religion and morals comes art : and here Nietzsche in his own way was again fortunate — perhaps too fortunate. During the whole of his residence at Naumburg he seems to have had only two real friends of his own age, the Wilhelm Pinder and Gustav Krug already mentioned. Pinder's father was a judge of intellectual and artistic aspirations. Young Fritz Nietzsche was in and out of the Pinders' house almost daily ; he did his homework along with Wilhelm Pinder, and came much under the judge's influence. The latter read selections of Goethe to his family, even when the boys and girls were very young, in order to accustom their ears to the sounds of noble language, and young Fritz was often in the audience. Krug's father, on the other hand, a Privy Councillor, was a noted lover of music,

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 49.

## THE CHILD

being not only a performer and composer himself, but also a friend of Mendelssohn and of other musicians of first rank. "An exceedingly select circle of music lovers used often to assemble at his house," says Nietzsche, "and almost every great musician who wished to appear before the Naumburg public tried to be introduced by him."<sup>1</sup> Thus at a tender age Nietzsche was brought into contact with literature and art in an unusual manner and to an unusual degree.

We need not be astonished, therefore, if we discover that when young Fritz Nietzsche relaxed, and played, he played not as other less privileged boys do, but in rather a bookish and even learned way. At the age of ten he composed a little motet, which he and his sister practised and sprang on the family as a surprise at Christmas. With the exception of a game of ball, which he played at Pobles, he seemed not to have played ordinary, ready-made games, in which many join, where the rules are fixed and well known, and where rivalry is the essence of things. On the contrary, his amusements tended to be individual, the elaboration of themes selected by himself. He built up an imaginary world of his own, into which he generally allowed his sister and devoted follower to enter; he painted, wrote verses, invented fairy stories and produced little plays. His two friends Wilhelm and Gustav were also admitted to this semi-private world, of which Fritz Nietzsche was the true owner and stage-manager. Wilhelm Pinder, presumably copying Nietzsche, also wrote an autobiography at the age of fourteen, and in it he writes at some length on his friend. "As a little boy," says Pinder, "he used to amuse himself with all kinds of toys which he had made himself, and all of which bore witness to an extraordinary inventive and self-reliant mind. He was leader in our games, introduced new methods into them, and thus made them attractive and full of novelty. . . . Many of my tastes were initiated and encouraged by him, more particularly in the case of music and literature."<sup>2</sup> Pinder was a true follower, and as such was admitted by Nietzsche to full intimacy. With Krug

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 46.

## NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche had a further bond in a special devotion to music, and since Krug possessed the required docility, he was also admitted to the magic circle. Thus Nietzsche lived until he was fourteen as the undisputed king and leader of this small society of kindred spirits and hero-worshippers, Elizabeth, Wilhelm and Gustav. There he was completely at home, and perhaps only there. His two boy friends, and if possible Elizabeth, had to share his experiences ; and when this was not possible, he was apt to be solitary and alone. This feature of his temperament was noted by Pinder. "From his earliest childhood," says the one boy of the other, "he loved solitude in which he could give himself up to his own thoughts. To a certain extent he avoided company, and would search out the spots where Nature displayed her sublimest beauty."

It is on record that young Nietzsche did not find his school work so easy as might have been expected, and in the beginning Greek in particular gave him much trouble. The rigour and fixity of the rules and forms of grammar did not afford at first the freedom which Nietzsche's soul demanded, and for the formal aspect of it he always had some distaste. He wished to lead, not to follow ; to create, not to conform ; hence in 1854, the year in which he reached the age of ten, he composed no fewer than fifty-five poems. They were not good poems. This was to be expected. They endeavoured to present magnificent pictures, romantic scenes of storm by land and sea and fire. They were based on no models, and were the outpouring of an untrained mind which tried to feel and tried to express itself, but which did not feel sincerely or deeply and did not have an adequate command over the means of expression. Probably most poets, and many who come in time to realise that they are not poets, are romantic of heart at first, and give early expression to turbulent and vague emotion in stereotyped and insincere forms. But few write so many poems at so early an age as Nietzsche did, or feel so strongly and persistently the urge to speak before they have anything to say. Nietzsche himself later on was not without insight into his own case, and in 1858, four

## THE CHILD

years after the first outbreak, he commented : " A poem which is empty of ideas and which is overladen with phrases and metaphors is like a rosy apple in the core of which a maggot lies hid. Stock phrases must as far as possible be eliminated from a poem, for the excessive use of such phrases denotes a mind which is not capable of creating its own sentences." <sup>1</sup>

As might be expected there was a strong didactic strain in Nietzsche's nature, even in boyhood, and it is directly connected with the characteristics of him which we have already noticed. As a young lad he took charge of his still younger sister, and tried to mould her mind as he would have it. He prescribed her reading, helped her to reach after the ideas he himself entertained, and thereby created a tiny but real social world where nothing was alien to him. As has already been suggested, and as we shall see more fully later, he was never quite at home in the great world : it was unsympathetic to him, unpliant, and not an instrument over which he had much control — and yet control he must have. He required therefore a smaller and more tractable realm, and if it were not given he had to make it. We shall see this trait reappearing in him at other stages of his life.

But in spite of his diffidence, his failure to make friends easily, and the awkwardness of his contacts with the rough world, Nietzsche had a profound conviction of his own merit and ability. And his sister records a short conversation in which there is depicted a delicious naïve blending of superiority and piety. In the spring of 1857 Fritz and she had both done well in school examinations. " When he and I were alone that afternoon, however," she remarks, " he said to me : ' Isn't it funny that both of us learn so well and know so many things that other children do not know ? ' When we had discussed the matter for a little while the secret motive for his question at last became apparent. ' I always wonder . . . whether it is not possible that our dear Papa in Heaven is the cause of it, and whether he does not give us good thoughts. Only a little while

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 31.

## NIETZSCHE

ago Aunt Rosalie gave me a letter to read from our Aunts in Plauen, and in it I found this passage : " Clearly their father's blessing lies on both children's heads : it is possible that God in his grace allows our noble Ludwig more influence over his fatherless children than other dead parents usually have ". ' ' ' ' <sup>1</sup> The Nietzsche tradition was strong.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 68.

## II

### THE SCHOOLBOY

IN the summer of 1855 changes began to occur in the Nietzsche household. Aunt Augusta, who had early secured and retained the household management, died, and her death was followed next year by that of Grandmother Nietzsche. Of the older authorities there remained only Aunt Rosalie; and Nietzsche's mother, now some thirty years of age, soon removed her from her dominating position and induced her to find a home of her own. When Aunt Rosalie left, Nietzsche's mother moved to a more convenient house with a large garden where the children could have greater freedom than had been possible under the old régime. School work, however, began to press heavily upon the boy. Greek, as we have seen, troubled him in the earlier stages, and he seems to have been overworked. Short-sightedness was hereditary in the Nietzsche family, and Fritz now began to be troubled by it. In the winter of 1856-7 he suffered considerably from headaches, and had to prolong his following summer holiday by some weeks in order to recover from the strain. One eye apparently was much weaker than the other, and Grandmother Oehler is said to have discovered that his pupils were not always of the same size. The discomfort, however, passed away for a time, and in the succeeding year no more complaints were made about it.

Nietzsche was distinguishing himself in school, and his performance there drew the attention of some friends of the rector of the famous institution of Schulpforta. This led in 1858 to the offer of a vacancy there, which, after due consideration and many tears, was eventually accepted. Nietzsche left Naumburg and entered Pforta as a boarder in October of that year, his age being fourteen.

## NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche himself recognised that a stage of his life was now ending, and he showed this by writing the autobiography to which reference has already been made, giving a complete account of himself up to the date of writing. Much of it, of course, depends on memories which doubtless have been considerably transformed by the passage of time, but even so, it yields a good deal of insight into his mind at this time. Henceforward he kept a diary, although not with complete regularity. Some of it is lost, but the remainder has been preserved by the piety of his sister, Elizabeth, and to it, and to the equally pious preservation of the correspondence which now became needful to him, we are indebted for a fuller knowledge of his inner life than is common among other men.

But before we consider Nietzsche himself further we must glance at the place where he spent six of the most formative years of his life.

Schulpforta, once a Cistercian abbey, had large grounds — some 73 acres — surrounded by an immense wall which secured the required monastic seclusion. It lay some distance from Naumburg, on the banks of the Saale river, and accommodated about 200 boarders. It attempted to give a complete education, forming character, moulding industrious and disciplined habits, and encouraging initiative as well as imparting instruction. The education it gave was primarily on classical lines ; and as was to be expected of the time and place, modern science did not play a large part in it, a fact not without importance in Nietzsche's development. The discipline of the school was fairly rigorous and the life somewhat Spartan. At five o'clock in the morning (in winter at six) the dormitories had to be empty. Half an hour later prayers were said, after which a cup of milk and a small wheaten roll were provided. At six o'clock work began, lessons intermingled with preparation, and it continued until twelve. After lunch — which was reasonably substantial — the boys went out of doors until a quarter to two. Then for two hours classes were resumed, and with a short break for light refreshments, work, including preparation, continued till seven o'clock. After supper

## THE SCHOOLBOY

the boys went into the garden again until half-past eight, and at nine o'clock, after prayers, to bed.

Most boys entering a boarding-school are home-sick at first ; Nietzsche, as might be expected, was more so than usual, and took longer to recover. He had left his two friends, Wilhelm and Gustav, behind him at Naumburg, and he did not form any really close friendships at Pforta for some years. He kept in touch as far as he could with his Naumburg circle, not only in the holidays, but also by meeting members of it frequently at week-ends at the little inn of Almrich, which, half-way between them, was within easy walking distance of both places. Almost a whole school year after he had entered Pforta we find Nietzsche so far from having reconciled himself to his new surroundings that in his diary he records a "cure for home-sickness" given by the teacher specially responsible for him :

- " 1. If we wish to learn anything valuable, we cannot always remain at home.
2. Our dear parents do not wish us to remain at home ; we therefore fulfil our parents' wishes.
3. Our loved ones are in God's hands. We are accompanied by their thoughts.
4. If we work diligently our sad thoughts will vanish."

To this is added :

- " 5. If all this is of no avail, pray to God Almighty."

At Pforta a prefect or monitor system was in force. Each boy was placed in the charge of a monitor, who had to help him with his work, ensure that he did his preparation, and also control his general behaviour. Over the monitors, however, there were tutors, members of the permanent teaching staff. It is obvious that the happiness and well-being of a boy might depend greatly on the character of the older boys to whose care

<sup>1</sup> Förster-Nietzsche, *Der werdende Nietzsche*, p. 55 f.



## NIETZSCHE

he was committed ; and many years before, another lad, also reserved and self-contained, had for a time suffered greatly through lack of sympathetic treatment at the same school — the philosopher Fichte. Nietzsche, however, was fortunate, for his superiors were kind to him, although at times he puzzled and even alarmed them by unusual forms of behaviour. On one occasion, we are told, the boys had been discussing the ancient story of Mucius Scaevola, who, on being condemned to death by fire for the attempted assassination of Porsena, the king of Clusium, out of bravado thrust his right arm into the flames and held it there without flinching. One lad remarked that to allow one's hand thus voluntarily to be burned away was dreadful and almost impossible. Nietzsche, however, denied this, and setting fire to a bundle of matches on the palm of his hand, held them steadily out in front of him. The monitor, appalled at Nietzsche's action, quickly knocked the matches away, but the hand was burned and had to be treated for some days.

The standard of scholarship at Pforta was high, and the methods which it adopted were, on the whole, well adapted to secure the ends it set itself. Nietzsche thus obtained an excellent grounding in the classical languages and was made thoroughly acquainted with the elements and mechanics of philology. This was of considerable importance to him. Pedantic accuracy and the over-elaboration of painful detail was never a weakness of his, and there was more than a little risk that if he were left to his own devices he might shirk the work necessary to master the less interesting parts. From this he was saved by the skill and thoroughness of his teachers.

Moreover, at first Nietzsche threw himself with ardour into his work. He took it more seriously than most boys are wont to do, and he looked with eager eyes at everything — or almost everything — that was presented to him. "When I reached Pforta," he wrote a few years later, "I had dabbled in almost every subject, except perhaps such sciences as were a little too exact, and tedious mathematics."<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche retained this en-

<sup>1</sup> *Der werdende Nietzsche*, p. 236.

## THE SCHOOLBOY

thusiasm at Pforta for a time, and, being naturally a well-conducted lad, continued to be a model little scholar.

But there was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction which gradually came to the surface. On the one hand, he still lacked friendships, and his tutor complained that he held himself too much aloof from the other boys; on the other, he required more mental scope than the school discipline afforded him, some field where, as in the days gone past, he might let his mind run free, planning, determining, criticising, and creating as far as he was able. And to meet these needs, in the second long vacation after he went to Pforta, he founded a small literary society, named *Germania*, and consisting, in addition to himself, of his two old friends Wilhelm Pinder and Gustav Krug.

The three boys bought a bottle of cheap red wine, and, proceeding to an old ruined castle, inaugurated the society there. They discussed their plans for promoting culture, pledged themselves to a bond of friendship and community of ideas, drank their wine and hurled the empty bottle into the abyss. According to the constitution of the society, each member once a month had to prepare a contribution, to be discussed and criticised by the others. Meetings were held quarterly in the school holidays, with fair regularity.

In this society Nietzsche let his mind run riot, and it afforded him both an intellectual and an emotional outlet. He contributed many pieces of music, songs, choruses, an overture and a fugue. Poems on heroic and romantic themes were not lacking, and he showed a sentimental interest in Serbian and Hungarian national aspirations. Perhaps, however, the most characteristic feature of the society when it flourished most vigorously was the series of lectures, delivered by Nietzsche, at six successive quarterly meetings to the assembled "synod", i.e. to the other two boys. In 1861, the year in which he reached the age of seventeen, he spoke to them on *The Childhood of Nations*, the *Ermanarich Saga*, a *Dante Symphony* and *Byron*. In the following year he discussed *Napoleon III as President*, and finally gave a lecture, to which reference will be made later, on *Fate and History*.

## NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche's sister points to a change in his musical tastes which took place at this time. When the period began Nietzsche's creed allowed merit to nothing but classical music, therein echoing the strong views of Krug's father. But the society out of its slender resources subscribed to *Die Zeitschrift für Musik*, which was an enthusiastic champion of Wagner, and when von Bülow prepared a piano transcription of Wagner's *Tristan* the society emptied its treasury in order to buy it. From that time Nietzsche was a declared Wagnerian. In the holidays after this momentous purchase Nietzsche and Kurg practised the piano version from morning till night—at the Nietzsches' house, be it said, for Mr. Krug would not stand the desecration. Neither boy, says Nietzsche's sister, had yet heard the opera, or knew how the melodies should be brought out. "They made an incredible noise," she says, "and the sound of their powerful voices reminded one of a howl."<sup>1</sup>

Not long after the founding of *Germania* Nietzsche began to form an important friendship at Pforta. This was with a boy called Paul Deussen, who remained in close touch with Nietzsche for many years, and made part of his spiritual pilgrimage with him. At Easter 1861, the two boys were confirmed together. "When the candidates for confirmation", says Deussen, "went up to the altar in couples in order to receive the sacrament on their knees, Nietzsche and I, as the closest friends, knelt side by side. I have still a vivid recollection of the holy and transcendental mood which filled us during the weeks before and after confirmation. We were prepared to leave this world at once and find ourselves by the side of Christ, and all our thoughts were bathed in a celestial cheerfulness. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche, it might seem, was getting over his difficulties in his own way, and adjusting himself to a selected environment.

But about this time a change took place. The statement from Deussen just quoted continues by saying that this celestial cheerfulness, "like a forced plant, could not live long, and withered away as quickly as it had sprung up beneath the im-

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Deussen, *Erinnerungen*, p. 4.

## THE SCHOOLBOY

pressions of everyday life and learning. Yet a certain faith remained within us until after our leaving examination, although it was really unconsciously stifled by the excellent methods of historical criticism with which the ancients were treated at Pforta, and which in those days we extended quite naturally to the domain of Biblical literature.”<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche, the adolescent boy, began to have religious doubts and to question the creed of his fathers. In later life he represented the break with the old faith as a quiet painless liberation, and indeed there is no evidence that Nietzsche ever endured the agony of mind which such a breach has caused to many a sensitive thinker. Like many others he felt it, or thought he felt it, as a liberation, a spreading of his wings and a flight above and beyond the walls within which he had been confined ; but it also meant a loss to him, a greater loss than he commonly admitted, and a loss he did not succeed in making good to himself. A fuller discussion of this point, however, may be reserved for a later occasion.

Meanwhile we may note another feature of this stage of his development. Scholastically he began to get into trouble. Nietzsche, as we have seen, although not an ordinary boy, had hitherto always been a model of propriety, and his school report at the end of the 1860-61 session, when he was attaining the age of seventeen, speaks of his work as satisfactory, very satisfactory or excellent, and describes his behaviour and industry as very good. But now he fell away from this high standard. School began to bore him. He resented having to follow a curriculum laid down by others, and wished to proceed on lines of his own. Like many another boy of his age, he bewailed his hard lot, believed himself to be misunderstood and showed a tendency to run counter to the ideals he had hitherto accepted. The religious questioning just referred to was one form of this. Another was the enthusiasm for Wagnerian music which we have also noticed. A third feature was the condemnation of all he had already written as childish, milk-and-water sentimentality, and the resolve to write in the future in a more virile fashion. At Christmas

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

## NIETZSCHE

1861 he received a present of Shakespeare's works, and he had already become acquainted with Byron. Under these influences, and also under that of Schiller, he and another lad, Garnier by name, began to write in what they took to be a manly way, with irony, power and realism. In practice this meant little more than rather cheap sarcasm and a second-hand indecency, reached by a sedulous collection of the coarsest expressions to be found in Shakespeare and Schiller.

Nietzsche also began to commit minor breaches of the school regulations, and on one occasion he got into trouble for using a report he had to make to the authorities as a vehicle of an untimely schoolboy humour, exercised partly at the expense of the masters. For this he was kept in for three hours and gated for a couple of Sundays. His mother, to whom he had to apologise for not meeting her as expected on one of those Sundays, wondered whether her good Fritz was being led astray by some less well-behaved boys. This suggestion was itself an irritant to the lad, and his state of mind is well shown by his indignant rejoinder: "There is no question of anybody exercising any influence over me, for in order for that to happen I must first get to know people whom I feel to be my superiors."<sup>1</sup> His sister, commenting on this statement, remarks on its untruth. She says that Nietzsche tended at this stage of his life to over-estimate the ability of his school friends, and she represents him as saying: "If only I were as gifted as So-and-so is, what should I not do!"<sup>2</sup>

The climax of this revolt was reached in April 1863, when one Sunday afternoon Nietzsche got mildly drunk. To some extent he had rehabilitated himself after his previous misdemeanour, and he had begun to take more interest again in his class work. This lapse gravely upset him and brought him to his senses. The letter to his mother in which he announces his fall from grace shows an interesting childish contrition in which the appropriate sense of guilt is accompanied by an attempt to disarm the critic.

<sup>1</sup> Nov. 1862.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 115.

## THE SCHOOLBOY

"Write to me soon," he says, "and write severely, for I deserve it; and no one knows better than I, how much I deserve it.

I do not need to give you any further assurances as to how seriously I have pulled myself together, for now a lot depends upon it.

I had once again grown too cocksure of myself, and this self-confidence has now, at all events, been very unpleasantly disturbed.

. . . By-the-bye, do not tell anyone about it if it is not already known. Also please send me my muffler as soon as possible, for I am constantly suffering from hoarseness and pains in the chest. Now good-bye, and write to me very soon, and do not be too cross with me, dear mother.

Your very sorrowful

FRITZ." <sup>1</sup>

This was the end of the difficult period; and for the year and a half which remained of his school life Nietzsche again was the perfect pupil. Several factors combined to bring about this result.

In the first place, just as the revolt was natural to Nietzsche's age, so was its cessation. The troubles of adolescence tend to diminish with time, and unless they take an unduly serious form, they cure themselves.

Secondly, the feeling of isolation and of being misunderstood, which is a natural form in which adolescent conflict expresses itself, and one to which Nietzsche was unduly liable both by temperament and by training, was reduced by the successful development of new friendships. In founding *Germania* in 1860 Nietzsche had established a small kingdom, apart from Pforta, in which he could reign. Now, in Pforta itself, he obtained a few friends with whom he could maintain the same intimate relationship as he did with Krug and Pinder. Only two are of importance. One has already been mentioned, Paul Deussen; the other was a young scion of the nobility, Freiherr von Gersdorff.

<sup>1</sup> April 1863.

## NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche never exerted any widespread influence among people he met. His schoolfellow, Garnier, who later practised medicine in Berlin, remarks candidly that Nietzsche took no prominent place among his comrades. "Among those who showed great intellectual activity", says Garnier, "he cannot be said to have played a leading part. . . . He showed no inclination to share in the noisy games that used to be played in the school garden, but with the rest of us as a *Primaner* he would readily walk to the village of Attenburg [Almrich] close by; he would not drink beer there, however, but greatly preferred chocolate."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Nietzsche tended to dominate his close associates. Von Gersdorff, who was six months behind him in the school, gradually came under his spell, and remained a devoted follower nearly all his life. Deussen, too, spoke with enthusiasm of those early days, and of what he owed to Nietzsche's ennobling influence. When Deussen, having reached the highest class in the school, fell in love, the lady, perhaps not unnaturally, did not take him too seriously, and got engaged to someone else. Nietzsche, his counsellor and guide, walked with the heart-broken lover through the cloisters, "quoting all the comforting arguments which lay hidden in the dust of books and the scholastic wisdom of the ancient Greeks and Romans". Moreover, he enshrined the experience in a poem -- *Faithless Love* -- which was duly submitted to *Germania*. What Pinder and Krug said about it is not on record.

Thirdly, the character of the work which was imposed upon Nietzsche by the school curriculum began to change, and gave more scope to his peculiar temperament. The early indiscriminate zeal in every branch, or almost every branch of knowledge, which, as we have seen, Nietzsche said was a feature of his earlier boyhood, disappeared, and was replaced by a desire to follow a more limited object of study to a further point. This desire he was now able to carry out. He had passed through the earlier stages of his study, had acquired considerable mastery over the

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 120 f.

## THE SCHOOLBOY

means of expression, and was consequently, in accordance with the system of education in vogue at Pforta, encouraged to do more independent work. He became interested in the Ermanarich Saga. He worked up his views on it for *Germania*, delivering them as an oration to the synod — Krug and Pinder ; he followed this up with a poem on the death of Ermanarich ; and finally he presented the results of his study in a school essay, concerning which he said in his valedictory address, he was "almost satisfied".

In his last year at school he had to write an essay in Latin on some important theme, a work involving some original research. Nietzsche chose as his subject Theognis of Megara, and attempted a presentation of the man and his writings as a whole. He divided his paper into three parts or chapters : first, an account of the life and times of Theognis ; then a discussion of his writings — the fragments attributed to him ; and finally, an examination of his views on theology, morals and public affairs. The subject appealed intensely to Nietzsche and he threw himself into the work with all his might. It was only a schoolboy's essay, but the subject had an unusually strong interest for him, so strong indeed that he followed it up later by another study in his student days, and some of the ideas of it remained with him throughout his life. It is therefore not surprising that, on this side at least, his school life finished in a blaze of glory. His mathematics remained poor, his knowledge of history and geography were regarded as not very thorough, but his classical training was excellent, and through the dry tones of his leaving certificate of proficiency we can discern the goodwill if not the enthusiasm of some of his teachers, when the hope is expressed that "by the aid of serious and thorough industry he will one day achieve something really creditable in his calling".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 135.



### III

## THE FRESHMAN

IN October 1864 Nietzsche, together with Deussen and several others from Pforta, enrolled as a student at Bonn. The University there, like that of Berlin, owed its existence to Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, the father of the king after whom Nietzsche was named. But there were more substantial reasons to justify the choice of it than those which might be derived from family piety. In those days Bonn had between eight and nine hundred students, ranking fifth in size among the German Universities ; and some of the members of its staff were of international reputation. Niebuhr had been there as a teacher and writer, and the town cherished the memory of Beethoven, who was born in it. In 1864 the two leading classical scholars, Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl and Otto Jahn, conducted a philological seminar which was the training ground of many distinguished men. Nietzsche enrolled in their classes, attending in addition lectures on Politics, Art, Church History and Theology.

In Germany at that time the contrast between school discipline and University freedom was very great, and Nietzsche felt that in some respects he was entering a new world. On leaving school he had an outburst of high spirits, which showed itself in a holiday spent with Deussen. The two lads, with a friend of Deussen's called Schnabel, made a tour of the Rhine district before settling down to University life. "The three of us", says Deussen, "went to Königswinter and, drunk with wine and friendship, we allowed ourselves to be persuaded to hire horses and to ascend the Drachenfels. It was the only time I ever saw Nietzsche on horseback. He was in the mood in which a man takes more interest in the ears of his mount than in the beauty of the scenery. He would persist in measuring them,

## THE FRESHMAN

and declared he could not be quite certain whether he was riding a horse or a donkey. We behaved more madly, however, late in the evening. The three of us strolled through the streets of the little town in order to serenade the girls whose presence we suspected behind the windows. Nietzsche was whistling and cooing, 'Pretty darling, pretty darling', Schnabel was talking all sorts of nonsense to a poor Rhenish lad who begged for a night's shelter, and I stood by absolutely at a loss to make head or tail of the new situation; when, suddenly, a man burst out into the street from a neighbouring door, and drove us away with a volley of abuse and threats. As if in expiation of this event, which, by the by, was quite exceptional, on the following day we gathered in the music-room of the Berliner Hof, ordered a bottle of wine, and purified our souls with Nietzsche's wonderful improvisations."<sup>1</sup>

On reaching Bonn Nietzsche discovered that he had to make some important decisions on his own responsibility. In the first place, the line of academic work to be followed lay in his own control. Nominally, to please his mother, he had allowed himself to be enrolled as a student of theology as well as of the Classics, but his study in the former faculty was a pretence soon abandoned. The study of Classical languages and literature, however — philology as it was called — seemed to offer the interest and training which he desired. In his valedictory statement at Pforta he had announced that his greatest intellectual need was to curb his tendency to spread his interest too widely. "Now that I am on the point of going to the University," he said, "I regard the following law for my further advance in knowledge as absolutely binding: to combat my tendency towards the detrimental acquirement of many subjects, and also to encourage and promote my taste for probing a matter to its utmost depths, and for tracing it to its remotest causes."<sup>2</sup> A few years later, towards the end of his student days, he amplified this account. "What I longed for was a counterweight to the changeful and unrestful nature of my tastes hitherto; I yearned

<sup>1</sup> *Erinnerungen*, p. 17 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Der werdende Nietzsche*, p. 237.

## NIETZSCHE

for a science which could be pursued with a cold reflection, with logical coolness and steady work, and with results that would not touch one's soul."<sup>1</sup> The last phrase is worthy of note. Nietzsche then continued: "All this I thought I should find in philology, and the first prerequisites to its study are the very things which a pupil of Pforta has ready to hand". He commented favourably on his training from this point of view, and commended his teachers for their breadth of culture and vision. Nietzsche thus by the concurrence of choice and training set out to become a Classical Scholar.

But the selection of an academic career was only a part, and indeed the easiest part of his problem. He found he had to orientate himself to life. On leaving Pforta and going to Bonn, he wrote, "I first realised to my great surprise how exceedingly well instructed, yet how badly educated, a pupil of such a royal school is when he goes to the University. He has thought out a good deal for himself and yet lacks the skill to express these thoughts. He has not yet experienced any of the cultivating influences of women's society; he fancies he knows life from books and from traditional hearsay, and yet everything appears to him strange and unpleasant."<sup>2</sup>

The statement is illuminating, and in particular the contrast drawn between instruction and education is of interest; nevertheless it is not completely adequate. It is hardly correct to suggest that even at this age Nietzsche lacked the skill to express his thoughts: when his mind was clear he could express himself with precision. His difficulties lay elsewhere. As he himself put it, he had learned life from books and traditional hearsay, and the picture he had formed of it did not fully correspond to the reality. In the statement quoted he emphasises his lack of contact with "the cultivating influences of women's society", and no doubt this was a factor in his embarrassment in coming into the larger world. But its importance can be exaggerated, for although this influence was lacking in the school it had not been altogether absent in Nietzsche's life. At home he was

<sup>1</sup> *Der werdende Nietzsche*, p. 298 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 300.

## THE FRESHMAN

surrounded by female influences, and at the homes of his friends he met cultured women of the best type. Nietzsche's difficulties on entering Bonn did not arise from his lack of knowledge of women, though no doubt it was profound, but rather from his lack of knowledge of men. As we have seen, on occasion and with a few intimate friends, Nietzsche could let himself go and play the fool with the best of them, but that was not the typical Nietzsche. We have rather to think of the little child walking solemnly home in the rain while the others ran, or the bigger boy at Pforta sedately sipping his chocolate at the Almrich Inn while the others drank their beer. Underneath there was the ordinary human need for relaxation and for the outpouring of boyish enthusiasm, but on the surface there was a restraint which held the boy back from full participation in the energies and follies and joys of his fellows.

Nietzsche himself realised this, and on entering Bonn he determined to make himself acquainted with the wider world, to be no recluse, but a man among men, able to comprehend and share in all their activities. The chief step he took was to join the *Franconia*, one of the *Burschenschaften*, or students' unions, which were a notable feature of German University life. Throughout the history of European Universities, from their beginning in mediaeval times, students had collected into societies or unions of some kind. At first they were classified according to the nations from which they came; then, as Universities became more numerous and students did not so often require to leave their countries, the groupings were modified, and in Germany the *Landmannschaften*, also organised on a territorial basis, took their place. In 1815 the *Burschenschaften* were founded with a patriotic and political object, their outlook being that which may perhaps be best described as national liberal. They stood at once for freedom and for a united Germany. In 1848 they were in the main on the reforming or even revolutionary side against the established autocracies. When the reaction came, however, their leaders were prosecuted, and the zeal of the followers gradually waned. In the course of time they lost

## NIETZSCHE

their political energy and importance and tended to become conservative. Bismarck was once one of their members, and as he changed so did they. In Nietzsche's time their chief activities and interests were social; conviviality, drinking, music of a sort, a strict code of honour, duelling, and a vast hauteur and arrogance towards all who did not enjoy their privileges and outlook being perhaps their most noticeable characteristics. Nietzsche, at least at first, did not perceive the humour of the situation when, in order to understand the ordinary man and share in his life, he joined one of the most exclusive and artificial bodies within his horizon.

At first sight there was nothing alarming in the step which he took. It appeared to him a step into the wide world, but a world that was not very wide, nor very strange. The society itself was small, and a photograph taken about this time shows only twenty-nine members, including Nietzsche. Moreover, according to Nietzsche's statement in his first letter home after he joined the society, all but two of these twenty-nine were ex-Pforta pupils, seven, including Deussen, being of Nietzsche's own year. "We are", he wrote, "for the most part, all philologists as well as lovers of music, and the older members please me mightily."<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning all went well. Nietzsche entered with might and main into all the activities of his comrades. He sang with them, attended musical festivals with them, danced and drank new wine with them at peasants' houses, and, as far as he could, matched the others pint for pint in beer. In November, he wrote home in some triumph that after one notable "drinking bout", where there were "endless torrents of punch", he rose quite fresh next morning, ready for the further convivialities which were still to follow. "The festival yesterday", he added, "was of a very splendid and elevating nature. On such evenings, believe me, there is a general spirit of enthusiasm which has little in common with the mere conviviality of the beer-table. This afternoon we are all going to march through the High

<sup>1</sup> End of Oct. 1864.

## THE FRESHMAN

Street in parade garb, and there will be a good deal of shouting and singing. Then we go by steamer to Rolandseck, where we have a big dinner in the Hotel Croyen." Next day he continued the account. "The weather has been beautiful; our march out, headed by a fine hussar band, attracted great attention; the Rhine was a beautiful blue, and we took wine with us on board. As we reached Rolandseck a salute of guns was fired in our honour. We then feasted till about six o'clock; we were extraordinarily merry, and sang many an original and ingenious song. Outside twilight had come; the moon lay on the Rhine and illuminated the peaks of the Siebengebirge, which loomed hazily through the blue mist. After the meal I sat beside Gassmann, who is the editor of the *Beer Journal* and the head of the commissariat, and is probably the most interesting man in the *Franconia*; we remained faithful to the good old Rhine wine while the others drank champagne punch."

In accordance with his new outlook on life Nietzsche took fencing lessons. Favouring, in theory, the arts of chivalry, he extended his goodwill to the duel, which, he thought, was a relic of the old spirit. When he had become sufficiently adept, he looked round for an opponent, and one day when out walking with a friend, he was struck by the idea that this friend would be a clever and pleasant adversary. So he turned to him, and suggesting that the usual preliminaries should be waived, asked whether he would care to fight him. The friend was surprised and amused by the request, but courteously assented. So Nietzsche fought his duel, receiving, it is said, a trifling wound.

Many years later, when, as far as in him lay, he was trying to look at the world frankly and without sentiment, Nietzsche wrote a brief defence of duelling. If a man has such sensitive feelings that life loses all value when others speak or even think ill of him, then, argues Nietzsche, he has the right to make the affair involve the death either of his detractors or of himself. "If", he goes on, "there exists a code of honour, which lets blood take the place of death, so that the mind is relieved after a

## NIETZSCHE

regular duel, it is a great benefit, because otherwise many human lives would be in danger.”<sup>1</sup> Whatever may be the merits of this theory, it is not based on Nietzsche’s practice. He fought his duel not with an enemy, nor to save an honour dearer to him than life, but with a friend and merely to assure himself that he was now a full-blooded man of the world.

But neither as a drinker nor as a duellist was Nietzsche fitted to vie with his fellows, and before long he turned in another direction. He excelled them all in musical ability, a fact which they willingly acknowledged; so that he soon found himself charged with the management of many of their musical undertakings. In addition, he made the fullest use he could of all the opportunities for musical enjoyment in which the Rhineland was rich, attending as many concerts and theatres in Bonn and Cologne as his purse allowed. He became a member of the local Choral Society and quickly got in touch with everyone of musical interest. Bonn prided itself on providing not only a birthplace for Beethoven, but also a grave for Schumann, and Nietzsche was influenced by the considerable amount of excellent Schumann music which he heard during the winter. Before the end of the year he composed eight musical settings to poems by Petöfi and Chamisso, all marked by the spirit of Schumann, and sent them to Naumburg, bound in lilac-coloured morocco, as a Christmas present.

Nietzsche’s path towards independence led him away from the faith of his fathers. One of the earliest signs of this change is shown in a paper entitled “Fate and History”, written as a contribution to *Germania* in the spring of 1862, about a year after his confirmation and more than two years before he left school. In itself the essay, although extremely ambitious, is of little or no value, but it affords some insight into Nietzsche’s mind at the time. The subject discussed is the old one of freedom and necessity, the point of view adopted is mainly that of scientific rationalism — man, individual and race alike, being treated as the product of vaster forces around him — but towards the end

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. viii, § 365.

## THE FRESHMAN

freedom is restored in an obscure and even enigmatic fashion. The last paragraph of the essay will give some idea of what Nietzsche thought might be a solution of this ancient mystery and also of the style which he then felt most suited to the expression of it :

“ Perhaps . . . as mind can only be the infinitely smallest substance, good the most subtle development of evil out of itself,”— there is a hint of the later Nietzsche here — “ the free will is nothing but the highest potency of fate. World history then is history of matter, if one takes the meaning of this word infinitely widely. For there must be still higher principles, compared to which all differences flow together into a great uniformity, compared to which all is development, gradation, everything streams to a huge ocean, where all threads of the development of the world are found again, unified, melted together, all — one.”<sup>1</sup>

One wonders what the other two young members of the synod made of this, but there is no information on the point.

The essay falls into two unequal parts. In the first and shorter of these Nietzsche hints at his views, but constantly draws back, giving as his excuse external forces which are too strong for the juvenile free-thinker. Criticism by immature minds he condemns as presumptuous, and he declares that “ to venture into the sea of doubt without compass and guide, is folly for undeveloped minds ; most will be driven off their course by storms, only very few will discover new lands ”.<sup>2</sup> He is conscious of putting to sea in a very small craft, and he professes to be made so uneasy by the unaccustomed motion that he must return to port. But he has actually no intention of going back, and in the second part he sets out boldly and regards the swelling waves within his misty horizon with assurance and even satisfaction.

At the beginning of his argument Nietzsche throws a general doubt upon the accepted views of Christian doctrine and history. A little later he prophesies popular commotions when the common

<sup>1</sup> *Der werdende Nietzsche*, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.



## NIETZSCHE

people come to realise that the existence of God, immortality, the authority of the Bible, never have been and never can be proved. And he lays great stress on the part played by early training in blinding the eyes of reason. Having become conscious of the persuasive influences of his home and his religious upbringing, Nietzsche is reacting violently against them, and even under the pretence of being restrained and dominated by them he is throwing them aside.

In a fragment written about a month later his view appears more clearly. Christianity is admitted to have an inner truth, but the supernatural element is stripped from it, and suggestions are thrown out for the reinterpretation of its doctrines from a rationalist point of view. The Christian outlook gives rise to a *Weltschmerz*, which, Nietzsche declares, is a sign of weakness, a failure to determine one's fate resolutely. This element must disappear from it. We must realise that justification by faith means merely that it is the heart rather than the head which determines happiness. That God has become man means merely that we must cease to think of another world and confine ourselves to this one. "Under heavy doubts and struggles", Nietzsche concludes, "mankind becomes manly: it recognises in itself the 'beginning, the middle, the end of religion'."<sup>1</sup>

The whole passage, although brief, suggests strongly the influence of some writer belonging to the left wing of the Hegelian school of thought, probably Strauss, for his sister tells us that at an early date — the actual date is not given — he read Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, and roused a storm of protest from his theologically minded Aunt Rosalie by the tactless suggestion that it, together with Von Haase's *History of the Church*, would be a suitable Christmas gift for Elizabeth. During his first semester at Bonn, when he was supposed to be studying theology, he compromised by devoting his attention to criticism of the sources of the New Testament, guided again by "*The Life of Jesus*, the work of the incomparable Strauss".

When Nietzsche returned home at Easter in 1865, his newly

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. i, p. 71.

## THE FRESHMAN

won independence began to assert itself, leading not unnaturally to some friction.

For one thing, there were financial difficulties. Bare living expenses at Bonn had been reckoned at 75 marks a month, and Nietzsche's guardian therefore thought an allowance of 90 marks would suffice. But like many another student, Nietzsche had wider ideas; a member of the *Franconia*, and a great music lover to boot, could not live on this scale. Hence his correspondence with his home contained much grumbling on both sides. At Easter he brought these troubles back with him, and after some discussion his allowance was raised to 120 marks.

In addition to this, Nietzsche now began to assert his new religious opinions at home, sometimes with considerable warmth, and he declined to attend the Communion service with the family at Easter. Nietzsche's mother was reduced to tears, but Aunt Rosalie intervened with the comforting argument that there were moments of doubt in the life of every great theologian, and that time would effect a cure. Nietzsche's mother accepted this assurance, but asked that Nietzsche should refrain from further religious controversy with her, undertaking at the same time to leave him free to follow his conscience.

Nietzsche, as was to be expected, exerted a great influence over his hero-worshipping young sister, and enlisted her sympathy against their mother in his intellectual emancipation. Elizabeth illustrates the situation thus. At the Naumburg Fair they saw a man selling red and green balloons to children, when a sudden gust of wind came, causing him much difficulty in controlling them. "Our dear mother," Fritz whispered to his sister with a smile. Then the wind gained the upper hand and wrenched a few of the red balloons from the man's grasp. "That which ought to fly, does fly!" was Nietzsche's delighted comment.<sup>1</sup>

But in spite of her sympathy, Elizabeth did not altogether share Nietzsche's outlook. She was disturbed in mind by his arguments, but she naïvely assumed that views which were right and true for her brother were not necessarily so for herself.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 153.

## NIETZSCHE

Accordingly she confided her difficulties to her brother, apparently after he had returned to Bonn, adding that she intended visiting two of her pious clerical uncles to have her faith restored.

Nietzsche replied in a letter which displays great controversial skill, and which was far beyond the power of the pious uncles to meet. There is an interesting indirectness about the argument. Nietzsche does not deal with the main issue, he says nothing about the facts, he tacitly assumes his point, viz. that inquiry would show Christianity to be false, and devotes himself to an ironical treatment of his sister's childishly worded statement that "truth is always on the side of the most difficult things". His argument need not be detailed, but his final point is perhaps worthy of note. "Certainly faith alone saves. . . . Every true faith is indeed infallible : it accomplishes that which the believer concerned hopes to find in it ; it does not offer the least support for the establishment of an objective truth.

It is here then that the ways of men divide : do you wish to strive after peace of mind and happiness, well then believe ; do you wish to be a disciple of truth, then inquire." <sup>1</sup>

The insistence that there are only two main roads, and that we have to choose between them, is a clever controversial device, far too clever for Elizabeth to cope with intellectually ; although Nietzsche had not sufficiently realised her power of going across country.

The second part of Nietzsche's stay at Bonn, the summer semester of 1865, did not pass so happily for him. He was not at home in the *Burschenschaft*, and after the novelty had worn off he felt out of place in it. Even before Easter there are signs in his correspondence of the growing discomfort of his student life. Thus, towards the end of February he writes : " In student circles here I am regarded as something of a musical authority, and into the bargain as a peculiar customer, as indeed are all the Pforta boys who belong to the Franconia. I am not at all disliked, although I am a little scornful, and am regarded as satirical. This estimate of my character from the opinions of other people

<sup>1</sup> 11th June 1865.

## THE FRESHMAN

will not be without interest to you. As my own judgment I can add that I do not accept the first point, that I am frequently unhappy, have too many moods and am inclined to be a bit of a tormenting spirit, not only to myself but also to others."

Try as he would, Nietzsche could not adapt himself to the rôle of the ordinary man. In the passage just quoted he says that not only he but also all the other Pforta members of the *Franconia* were regarded by other students as peculiar customers, but as we have seen they made up the bulk of the *Franconia*. The truth is that they liked beer, they liked to make a noise, to shout half-drunken songs, and to march in procession with cap and sash to mark them off as the *élite* of the earth. Nietzsche did not do so. Nor was he at home for long in a large gathering where he could not shine. He demanded a small group, one or two other people, perhaps only one other, where he could be ruler and guide. In his soul he demanded not only reverence and respect, but also a sensitiveness and an accommodation of mood which only an intimate friend can give and where there is nothing to disturb the intimacy.

Listen to him in later life : " Conversation between two is perfect conversation, because what the one says gets its definite colour, its tone, its accompanying gestures, in strict regard to the other who is being spoken to ". When several people are involved, it is not possible to make adequate allowance for their individual differences. " Accordingly," says Nietzsche, " in conversation with several people a man is compelled to draw back on himself, to present facts as they are, but to remove from objects that lightly moving aether of humanity, which makes a talk one of the most pleasant things in the world." <sup>1</sup> This is drawn from life, and we can readily understand how the man who drew it was miscast in the rôle he had adopted at Bonn.

In scholarship too Nietzsche was not making the progress he desired. He was committing the sin he had forsworn, the scattering of his interests into too many channels. Not only *Franconia*, but also music took much of his time. From the

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. viii, p. 280.

## NIETZSCHE

latter, of course, he continued to derive solace and enjoyment. He attended a great musical festival in June in the capacity of a member of the chorus, and sang with gusto at all the performances extending over three days of torrid heat. But pleasant as all this was, it did not meet his real need, and he knew that he was neglecting his scholarship. As we have seen, two of his teachers, Ritschl and Jahn, were outstanding men. Both were more than scholars, being competent men of affairs. Jahn, who divided his interest between modern music and classical antiquity, and who is perhaps best known for his life of Mozart, had been deprived of an academic chair for a year or two on account of the part he had taken in the revolutionary movement of 1848. Later on, at the time of the Schleswig-Holstein crisis, he had been entrusted with a diplomatic mission. Ritschl also had a strongly marked personality; informal, vivacious, even overbearing at times, craving for friendship and yet rather isolated, he was far from being a dreamy scholar, and had a practical talent which would have brought him to the front in many other walks of life.

Unfortunately the two men quarrelled. Both had been ill, and Jahn at least was greatly overworked. But if they had been left alone their differences might easily have been composed. Unfortunately others joined in the controversy, and it spread not only throughout the University of Bonn, but also into the other Universities and into the Press of Germany. What the precise point of the quarrel was it is hard to say now, and we need not apportion responsibility for it. But official censure fell on Ritschl, who decided at the end of the semester to accept a call to Leipzig.

Nietzsche deplored the whole situation, and expressed his disapproval, tastefully flavoured with his growing anti-theological bias, in a letter home. "No one can enjoy the affair," he said, "with the possible exception of the local theologians, to whom a row of this sort between the philosophers, the representatives of the humanities, may not be altogether unwelcome."<sup>1</sup> His

<sup>1</sup> 3rd May 1865.

## THE FRESHMAN

contact with Jahn was probably closer than that with Ritschl, whom he still admired somewhat from a distance, and winning to von Gersdorff, he described Jahn as exceptionally likeable. But although he thought Jahn completely in the right, he refrained from taking any part in the hostilities or committing himself to either side in public.

Before this controversy came to a head Nietzsche had decided to leave Bonn. At the end of January he wrote home saying that it was clear to him that he could not stay where he was for more than a year. He does not give any express reason, but proceeds significantly at once to discuss his financial difficulties. A month later he reiterates his decision, stating that life in Bonn is demonstrably more expensive than in other universities. Finance, therefore, was one factor in the situation. But it was not the only one, or indeed the main one — for his resolution was not changed after Easter when his allowance had been increased. A stronger reason was the growing dissatisfaction with his whole mode of life and a desire to cut the bonds by which he had united himself to his fellow students. It was with considerable satisfaction that he discovered that his friend Gersdorff was in a similar case. Gersdorff, a student at Göttingen, had joined the Saxonia Corps there, and finding himself very unhappy in it, wrote to Nietzsche that he regarded the experience of it as a test of character. Gersdorff determined to go to Leipzig, and when Nietzsche heard this he felt that the choice of a University was made for him also. He told Gersdorff of the disgust he now felt for the “beer-materialism” of his comrades, and encouraged Gersdorff in his decision to break with the past and start afresh in Leipzig. When Nietzsche heard that Ritschl was going there he rejoiced, and this pleasure compensated to some extent for the sorrow he felt in leaving Jahn.

Having thus made up his mind, he looked back on his year's work and found it far from good. “From my University teachers,” he wrote in September, “apart from details, I have learned nothing. I am grateful to Springer” who lectured on Art and Literature — “for some enjoyment. I could be

## NIETZSCHE

grateful to Ritschl, if I had used him diligently. In that respect I am not altogether dissatisfied. I lay much stress on self-development — and how easily can one not be dominated by men like Ritschl, carried away — perhaps into paths which lie far from one's real nature."<sup>1</sup> But this, although, as we shall see, it had truth in it, was mainly an excuse, and not a reason. Nietzsche's work had been bad, and he knew it.

It is little wonder then that he left Bonn with the feeling not only that he had wasted his time, but also — and this cut deeper — that he had failed in what he had attempted to do. His fellows in their own way had been kind to him. In spite of his irony — a mark of his injured self-esteem — he was not at all disliked, and when he left the University his comrades escorted him with a band to the steamer.

In an account, written two years later, Nietzsche does not mention this. Instead, he dramatises himself in another rôle, and takes up the story only after the band had gone home again. In his own mind, in retrospect, he left Bonn like a fugitive. As he waited till midnight with his new friend Mushacke on the river-bank for the steamer from Cologne, he had no regrets at leaving such a land of beauty, or in parting from a crowd of young companions. Indeed, he felt, it was those very companions who were driving him forth. It was not, however, he admits, so much a fault in them as a weakness in himself. He lacked the self-confidence necessary to make him feel at home with them; he felt dominated and overwhelmed by them, and among them he was unable to satisfy his urgent need for mastery of some kind. As in the course of the year he had become more and more conscious of this failure, he had become increasingly more critical of them. The glamour faded and gave place to a cold light in which Nietzsche saw in his fellows a coarse, Philistine spirit, expressing itself in excessive drinking, rowdyism and a burden of debt. Gradually he had given up the *Franconia*, in which he felt himself increasingly a stranger, and turned to the solitudes of nature with some intimate friend. Full of the

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mushacke, Sept. 1865.

## THE FRESHMAN

disappointment to which these feelings and experiences gave rise, Nietzsche felt that his student life had begun in failure. As the steamer left the quay, he stayed on deck in the damp rainy night and watched the lights on the river-bank disappear in the distance. Everything, he thought, conspired to give his departure the appearance of flight.

In October of this year — 1865 — he closed his account with Bonn. He sent back his sash to the *Franconia*, with a letter of resignation. He told the society that some of its features did not please him, and although it might have been partly his own fault it was only with difficulty that he had been able to endure membership of it for a year. He concluded with a wish that the society might grow out of the stage of development in which it then was, and hoped that it would always have high-minded moral men as its members.

His comrades may have deemed him a difficult fellow to fathom, but they thought they understood him now, and they erased his name from their annals.



## IV

### THE STUDENT

NIETZSCHE entered his new University with different feelings and a different outlook from those of a year before. He was no longer naïvely enthusiastic and eager to mix with the crowd; on the contrary he was disillusioned and disappointed, both with other people and himself, and he was unwilling to give himself and his intimacy to any but selected friends. Of course, he had cut himself off from the *Burschenschaften* and all their doings, and even to the University teachers he adopted at times a detached attitude. He admired Ritschl, he was eager for his commendation and support, and he soon became on friendly terms with him; and yet for a time he showed an aloofness which did not promise well for the future.

Nietzsche had apparently chosen his *Fach*, his line of work, and had set out to be a classical scholar; but he took only fragmentary notes of his lectures, which, moreover, he attended irregularly, and he lacked interest in much of the work he had to do. Like many another student, though with more justification than most, he felt that he could acquire the necessary knowledge when he wished. So in his classes, when he did attend them, he took up a lofty and self-centred attitude; he imagined himself already a University teacher, and, studying the lecturers whom he heard, he judged them favourably or unfavourably by reference to his own conception of the way in which he would have carried out the task.

Nietzsche attended Ritschl's lectures, but at first he did not join the seminar, where, of course, Ritschl's influence was greatest. The reason for this abstention is not given us, but it may be surmised. As we have seen, Nietzsche admitted a fear that he might be dominated by a man of such strong personality

## THE STUDENT

as Ritschl, and it is probable that he was not willing to come to close quarters with him until he felt surer of himself and could rely on being treated intellectually with respect. One evening several of the old Bonn students, including Nietzsche, had been invited to Ritschl's house, and Ritschl threw out the suggestion that they should form a philological club. To Nietzsche the idea was welcome, and he discussed it eagerly with some of the others, with the result that a club — in its way an enlarged edition of *Germania* — was promptly formed. Early in the new year Nietzsche gave his first lecture to it, speaking on a recent edition of the poems of Theognis. Before this select audience he overcame his feelings of shyness, expressed himself with force and eloquence, and created a very favourable impression. Gratified and buoyed up by this result, he handed his manuscript one afternoon to Ritschl, as one who would say "I too have done something". Ritschl was surprised, but read the manuscript, approved of it, and encouraged Nietzsche to rewrite it for publication, promising to supply him with additional material. For some days after this Nietzsche went about in a state of almost bewildered elation, through which there glowed the conviction that he really was called to be a successful philologist.

Ritschl now offered him the opportunity of greater intimacy, an opportunity which Nietzsche could afford to accept; for he had received recognition and his independence was not felt to be endangered. He visited Ritschl frequently, and was entertained informally by him and his wife, but it was not until the third semester that he joined Ritschl's seminar.

Ritschl was Nietzsche's first real guide and counsellor, and to him Nietzsche owed most of the genuine scholarship he possessed. Not inappropriately therefore do we hear of *Father* Ritschl.

In a passage already quoted and dating from his schooldays, Nietzsche spoke of a dangerous tendency to scatter his interests, and of his resolution to combat it, and in another passage, written some eight years after his entry to Leipzig but referring to that time, he reverts to the same theme. There are two competing educational doctrines, he tells us. According to one of

these the duty of the educator is to discover the pupil's special aptitude and to develop it to the uttermost : according to the other, the educator has to provide a balanced training which will develop the whole man and give every faculty its equal share. Characteristically enough, Nietzsche leaves the discussion with only the suggestion of a solution, but that suggestion, although applied only and somewhat obscurely to the case of Benvenuto Cellini, may readily be brought to bear on the present situation. Perhaps, Nietzsche suggests, it may be possible for an educator so to develop a pupil's greatest talent that his other abilities are required by it. He is not, as it were, made equal on all sides and cut to a pattern ; on the contrary, his main interest is developed to the full. But it is not allowed to stand alone, a mere fragment of culture ; it has to gather all his other powers under it and give scope to them there. The duty of the true educator, Nietzsche maintains, is to find this chief talent in his pupil, and to assist the latter in organising his whole life by means of it.

It may fairly be said that Ritschl undertook this task, and carried it through with considerable success. Ritschl was no mere pedant : had he been so his influence over Nietzsche would have been small. But he was an accurate and careful scholar, with a due sense of responsibility in his thought and a power of weighing evidence. He was at once an artist and a scholar ; for to him every problem in scholarship was like a work of art, to be seen as a whole, and its solution was a thing of beauty. This virtuosity appealed to Nietzsche, and under Ritschl's influence he acquired much of the equipment and reputation of a scholar. At Bonn he had been conscious of the discordance of his interests, of wasted time, of work neglected or ill-done ; but now, at Leipzig, these evil conditions were gone, and he was more favourably placed than at any other time of his life. We have seen what an important part his small literary society, *Germania*, had played in his earlier mental development and happiness, and how it sustained him against the too great rigour of the school régime. At Leipzig the philo-

## THE STUDENT

logical club meant even more to him, for it went hand in hand with his official University work. Projects chosen by himself, worked up into lectures to the club, became the basis of more enduring contributions to learning. In addition to the lecture on Theognis already mentioned, Nietzsche gave three other lectures to the club. One of these was a discussion of the sources of Suidas, a very late Greek lexicographer, about whom little is known. The Lexicon is badly executed, but it contains valuable material, and Nietzsche tried to discover where Suidas obtained it. Nietzsche followed this by a lecture on the 'lists of the writings of Aristotle. There are three such lists, the chief of them being in the works of Diogenes Laertius, whose history of the Philosophers, in ten volumes, is also a somewhat uncritical compilation. As a background to his discussion of the Aristotelian canon, Nietzsche was led to consider in his own mind the sources on which Diogenes Laertius himself drew ; and while he was thus engaged, the University, instigated by Ritschl, offered a prize for an essay on the subject. Nietzsche won the prize, and this victory was followed by the triumph of seeing his essay appear serially at full length, under Ritschl's auspices, in several successive numbers of the *Rheinisches Museum*.

This was not Nietzsche's only publication of the kind. His study of Theognis appeared in the same journal, and so did a paper concerning Simonides' *Ode on Danaë*. Moreover, in 1868, after the *Rheinisches Museum* had been in existence for twenty-four years, he was entrusted with the task of preparing an index for it. It should not be forgotten that when at the beginning of 1869 Nietzsche was offered a University chair in Basle, he was chosen because of the reputation which he had already gained as a scholar ; and above all it was to Ritschl that he owed both the reputation and the training which lay behind it.

But classical scholarship, even in the liberal guise in which Ritschl presented it, was not enough for Nietzsche : it was not a true end, and it did not satisfy all the needs of his soul. Of course, it meant much to him, and without the austere discipline of its training he would have had no vision of the beauty of any

## NIETZSCHE

Greek ideal at all. But Nietzsche did not want to be dominated by the scholarship itself, nor was he interested in any static dead world of the past : his mind was set on something essentially human and alive. The editions of Theognis were very well in their way, and offered some pretty problems ; but Theognis of Megara himself was something greater. And Nietzsche looked, or tried to look, through the fragments, and through the collated manuscripts, to the ancient aristocrat, exiled in poverty and loneliness from the city which he loved, and casting his resentment, his fears, his hopes into the forms of immortal poetry. So too for Nietzsche behind Diogenes Laertius there stood, nay rather there moved, the dimly seen figures of the great philosophers themselves ; not abstractions and logical doctrines, but individuals, each himself and like no other, embodying at once his temperament and his views of the world in some great central doctrine. Ritschl mildly disapproved when the philologist approached philosophy too closely : in Nietzsche the conviction grew ever stronger that the whole function of philology was to bring men into the most intimate contact with philosophy. Father Ritschl, thus, was no more than a stepfather, and we have now to consider a rival to him, one who, for many years, exercised an even more decisive influence over Nietzsche, and who, Nietzsche thought, stood even more closely in the relation of a father to him. This was the philosopher Schopenhauer.

At the beginning of his stay in Leipzig, when the mood of frustration and friendlessness left by the experiences of Bonn was still upon him, Nietzsche came across the writings of Schopenhauer. The effect of them on his mind was revolutionary, and in a man of another faith might have been regarded as a religious conversion. It was revolutionary, in spite of the fact that its appeal was partly to elements of childish beliefs which Nietzsche thought he had cast behind him, and it was a religious conversion in spite of the fact that in the forefront of the teaching there stood the denial both of a personal God and of the immortality of the individual soul. We must consider this doctrine

## THE STUDENT

and its teacher rather closely to discover what Nietzsche found in them.

We may begin with a reference to Schopenhauer's style. If we compare him with the German philosophers of his own generation and the generation before him, we can say that he alone was a writer. Kant, Fichte and Hegel were great thinkers, but they were not great writers, and they did not approach their task from the writer's point of view. Kant — at least in his first Critique — is the pure thinker, and he expects the reader to be a pure thinker also. He exacts from him the toil of thought through which he himself goes, and demands the same power of holding many things together that he himself possesses. Fichte is an orator, conscious of his audience and intent on carrying it with him. To follow him the reader has to throw his thought into dramatic form, let the speaker play upon him and build up an atmosphere by the repetitions, the tensions, and all the other devices of the practised orator. Hegel is a lecturer. Of course he is a thinker, perhaps the most sustained thinker of them all, demanding the greatest concentration of thought from his reader. But he speaks systematically and yet conversationally, and some of the difficulty falls away if his works are read aloud intelligently, with the emphasis where a good lecturer would place it.

In contrast with these three Schopenhauer is a writer. His work gains little by being read aloud, he places his words himself for the reader and asks for no skill of emphasis. His thought as he expounds it is simpler than that of his predecessors, it does not turn and twist so much, it is less obscured by qualifications or by technical expressions. He can make one idea do a great deal of work, and he has a pretty turn of metaphor. Often in reading Kant or Fichte or Hegel one wonders whether after all one's labour one has reached the author's real meaning; with Schopenhauer this is hardly ever so. Of course he is not perfect. Sometimes his sentences are unduly long, and occasionally even clumsy; but in general he is lucid and not exacting. If the reader is not sure at times of an idea, Schopenhauer will give

him a picture to enable him to see it as clearly as he does himself. He tells all he knows. When there is a real obscurity, an unanswered question, it is not so much the fault of Schopenhauer the writer as of Schopenhauer the thinker.

But attractive as a good style is, it is not enough to explain the hold which Schopenhauer has obtained over many men's minds: for an understanding of that we must turn to the doctrine.

"Life", said the young Schopenhauer to Wieland, "is a sorry affair, and I am determined to spend it in reflecting on it." Schopenhauer came to this conclusion about life very early. An unsatisfactory home and an abnormal temperament combined to make life difficult for him. An able but rather coarse-grained, dogmatic and short-tempered father, a self-centred, life-enjoying, self-complacent mother, many changes of dwelling, an unsettled home life with extended periods of travel; that is the one side. An undisciplined, selfish and rather sensuous nature, shrill in its cries against the stupidities and indifferences of the world, and a quick tendency to see the poorer side of things, the failures, and miseries, the less seemly aspects; that is the other. At the difficult age of fifteen he received even less care than usual. For three months, while his parents spent a holiday in Scotland, he was left almost friendless in lodgings in London, receiving from his somewhat detached mother the chilly admonition that he might with advantage adopt a more affable and accommodating nature, and the warning to put a prompt check on his tendency to bombast and empty pathos. Dragged about the Continent with his parents when he ought to have been in school, he recorded in his diary what he saw. In it there is little of the grandeur and the beauty of the scenes through which he passed, and much about the weakness, the oppression, the futilities, which his eye could pick out in the landscape. As one writer puts it: "His was no doubt an abnormal constitution, probably further unstrung by this roving style of life, which facilitated those fits of moody absorption in the inevitable misery of the world. Such a spirit may become

## THE STUDENT

a prophet and a seer ; it will certainly, by this uncomfortable clairvoyance, not qualify its possessor to play a part in the social comedy or to bear calmly the little worries of existence."

Schopenhauer, the philosopher, generalised and justified the outlook on life of Schopenhauer, the problem child and disappointed man. Life is essentially futile, a vain thing, with no end to be attained and no lasting satisfaction to be reached. This desolate conclusion is based on very simple psychological premises. Life, thought, even movement in general, arise from dissatisfaction, and dissatisfaction means suffering, want, pain in some form. All our activity arises in the effort to rid ourselves of this dissatisfaction. But when we achieve this end, not only our activity but our feeling tends to die away, and if our achievement were complete it would ultimately defeat itself. If we regard the accomplishment of our aims as happiness, then happiness, says Schopenhauer, is essentially a negative thing. Suffering, want, pain constitute the positive element, and life is essentially the struggle to remove them. Satisfaction, if it could be thoroughly reached, would be merely satiety. But we are saved from this by the constant breaking forth of new desires with their fresh burden of suffering. Life then, Schopenhauer argues, is a long tale of suffering and discontent, punctuated by periods of tedium. "Thus", he says, "between desiring and attaining all human life flows on throughout. The wish is, in its nature, pain, the attainment soon begets satiety. the end was only apparent, possession takes away the charm, the wish, the need, presents itself under a new form, when it does not, then follows desolateness, emptiness, ennui against which the conflict is just as painful as against want"<sup>1</sup> Life in general thus is evil—some forms of it are worse than others, but they are all bad.

Behind this psychological interpretation of life there is a metaphysical theory which not only explains the futility of our ordinary existence by tracing its foundations back into the nature of things, but also offers a means of escape from misery, perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Works ( Insel Edition ), vol. 1, p. 116



even a mode of salvation. But before we consider the metaphysics and what it has to offer we may give another glance at the psychological interpretation itself. In his account of ordinary human life Schopenhauer is without doubt the most thoroughly and comprehensively pessimistic of all the Western philosophers. But in the history of human thought, and particularly of religious thought, he does not stand alone. Even in the Hebrew Scriptures, which in Schopenhauer's eyes manifest an essentially realistic and optimistic conception of life, there is to be heard the voice of the Preacher, crying "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." There is a strong affinity between Schopenhauer's teaching on this point and the philosophy, particularly the Buddhist philosophy, of India, where the vanity of human wishes, the suffering and evil which lie in all desire, were to countless millions a commonplace of ethical thought. And even in the West, both in the Catholic and in the Protestant Church, there were analogues, or even more than analogues, to Schopenhauer's view. It is perhaps with a sense of shock that one first grasps the stern doctrine of Calvinism that, since the Fall of Man, human nature has been essentially and completely corrupt; and that nothing that anyone can do by his own impulse and without the assistance of supernatural grace is of any merit whatever. All innocence, according to this grim doctrine, has been lost; all thoughts, of the child, the maid and the man, are by themselves tainted and impure, all actions evil. This, it may be said, is an extreme teaching, revolting both to the conscience and to the common sense of modern men; and no doubt it is so. But is it much more than an explicit statement, over-emphasised and set in a stronger light than usual, of what is to be found in many of the saints and teachers of the Christian Church? St. Augustine, Pascal, Bunyan?

Even in our milder days, the sense of sin has not been altogether lost. Men still turn, or believe that they turn, with their whole nature from one form of life to another, and repudiate the old man and all his doings. But they do not merely turn away from the old life, they emphasise it, insist on it, as they

## THE STUDENT

turn. They still make public confession, and reveal their inner worthlessness to the public eye.

Why are these doctrines held ? Why are sins and iniquities paraded in public ?

One answer given is that it is a subtle form of self-aggrandisement. The dreadful sinner catches the public eye, and obtains a sense of power by means of his very wickedness. There was more in him than people knew : it was evil, but it was strong, and the confession of it, with due repentance, gives the sinner importance, even in the kingdom of light. But, true as this sometimes is, it is not all. There is a deeper and more fundamental element involved in the situation.

Perhaps it will be of assistance to us here if we anticipate for a moment an idea with which we shall be more directly concerned at a later stage, and make use of part of Schopenhauer's theory of art, as modified and corrected by Nietzsche, to throw light upon the present subject. For Schopenhauer, the object of art is a form which has a universal quality, which rises above the confines of space and time, and can only be seen by one who detaches himself from what is local and personal. This view leads us to a difficulty in the case of lyric poetry. Lyric poetry is essentially personal and the singer fills it with his own moods, his loves and his sorrows. But lovers are fickle, and sorrows do not last for ever. How is it possible to reconcile this personal, individual, fleeting aspect with the claim that the object of art must be universal and above change ? Schopenhauer is half-hearted, and solves the difficulty by a compromise, according to which the poet, or the singer, alternates between two attitudes, sometimes taking up that of the individual and sometimes that of the universal. Nietzsche will have none of this ; boldly and in accordance with Schopenhauer's own fundamental principles he unites the two aspects directly. And surely he is right ! Lyric poetry is personal and the life of the song is a mood. But who is the person ? The poet ? Yes, but more than the poet. The singer ? Yes, but which singer ? Surely every singer ; and every hearer too. Everyman is the hero of the song, and therein

lies its universality. Again, it expresses a mood, and moods are fleeting. But in the song the mood is lifted out of its context, raised above mutability, and enshrined for ever in a timeless, passionless calm. The individual and the universal, passion and the passionless, time and the timeless come together in the lyric and are at one. In the song the mortal puts on immortality, and the singer becomes the vehicle of something infinitely greater and more universal than himself.

This conception, however defective the expression of it may be, contains an essential truth, and it may help us to understand the attitude of mind with which we are immediately concerned. When the individual is overcome by a sense of weakness, futility or sin, he is also commonly oppressed by a painful feeling of inferiority, and therein lies much, although not all, of the sting of defeat. But the situation is changed if defeat is felt to be due not to personal deficiency, but to the overwhelming force against one. Disappointment and frustration are not then felt to involve the same inferiority, and the man who goes down fighting against tremendous odds need not be a weakling. The very intensifying and universalizing of the evil thus lightens it. If there are no ends to reach there is no disgrace, although much unhappiness, in not reaching them. If man cannot but sin, he may be guilty before a righteous and jealous God, but his guilt is less in his own eyes. Thus it is not the greatest actual sinners who accuse themselves most of sin, but rather those who are most sensitive to the taint, and who yearn most for a vision of the beauty of holiness; and they lighten the burden of their guilt by increasing it. So, too, the man for whom life is vain and futile, may find some relief in the discovery that it could not be otherwise; and his petty vanity is swallowed up in the discovery that all is vanity. The individual thus is merged in the universal, particular sins and particular frustrations are of no account; man is no longer a fool or a knave, but a tragic hero.

This notion, acting not in the form of a theory but rather in that of an obscure feeling, helps to explain why some men deliberately look at the blacker side of things and of their own

## THE STUDENT

being. They are not posturing and exhibiting themselves before their neighbours or decrying others out of malice and envy ; they are reassuring themselves, justifying man against the gods and against fate ; and in so doing they manifest an ennobling and not a degrading aspect of human nature.

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

THE ordinary man is afraid of the word metaphysics ; perhaps not without reason. If he is humble by nature, it suggests to him a knowledge above the reach of his understanding ; or, if he is less humble, a trifling and even disgusting play of words, in which nonsense struts across the stage in the guise of profundity. It is therefore with trepidation that we proceed to consider the metaphysical aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy. But some discussion of it is desirable if we are to understand either him or Nietzsche ; and if we restrict our attention to the main lines, the difficulties may not be too great for us.

The philosophy of Schopenhauer takes its rise in that of Kant, and Schopenhauer regarded himself as Kant's only true successor. But in the part of Kant's philosophy with which we are most concerned, a line of thought is developed which began much further back.

To the ordinary man there is no problem of knowledge. In order to apprehend the real world we have merely to open our eyes and look at it or stretch out our hands and touch it. But one of the great thinkers of early modern times, Galileo, came to doubt this. Things act on our senses and produce sensations in us, but the sensations are not the things themselves. If a feather tickles us, the tickling is in us and not in the feather. So too, argued Galileo, if light from an object falls on our eyes, the resulting colours are in us and not in the object or source of the light. This argument, when first propounded, disturbed many men's minds, but it gradually won its way into scientific and philosophic thought, and although some philosophers have had qualms about it, it became a commonplace with most scientific thinkers. Objects, as they really are, have shape, size,

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

movement — the primary qualities as they came to be called — but not colour, taste, or odour, or any of the other sensory qualities ; the latter exist only in the mind.

Modern thought had got over its first shock and had become accustomed to the Galilean view of the world, when Kant upset it still further. Space and time, said Kant, together with several principles of thought of which causality is the chief example, also depend upon the mind and are meaningless apart from it. Men who indulged in philosophic or scientific thinking were prepared, before Kant, to admit that although objects looked coloured, the colour was not in the object as seen, and was not in the real thing. In the latter there were shapes, atoms, light-waves, movements, and nothing more. The mind, it was agreed, did something to the object, it painted it over as it were, and hid its true character by a layer of sensation ; but scientific thought had hitherto resisted efforts by some philosophers to carry the matter further, and the primary qualities were held to belong to reality.

Kant, however, now argued that the mind did far more than this : it provided not only the sensations, but also the space things seem to fill, the time during which they endure, and even the causal connections between them. Of course, objects as they appear to us — phenomena, to use the Greek word — have, or seem to have, shape and size, and they seem to move, change, and act on one another ; but these qualities no more belong to them as they are in themselves apart from the mind, than do the colours, tastes, or odours, which also appear to be in objects and yet are recognised to be mere appearances. Mind, it was now argued, supplies not only the sensory qualities of the objects it perceives, but their other qualities also.

This was a devastating result, and what gave it its power was the line of thought by which Kant supported it. He was revolutionary not only in the conclusions he reached, but also in the method by which he reached them. The very argument which seemed to Galileo to show that primary qualities belonged to things-in-themselves, viz. the contention that they were

## NITZSCH

necessary and indispensable to experience, was turned by Kant into a proof that they depend on the mind. The argument in detail is a difficult one, and if this were a formal treatise on philosophy we should have to spend some time on it. But a summary treatment is possible here, and the argument may be shortened by leaving out much that is necessary for a proper understanding of Kant, but has no direct bearing on Schopenhauer.

Kant's main argument, roundly stated, is as follows. In reference to external objects, real objects as we would usually call them, we find ourselves making statements which are not derived from experience, and which we nevertheless regard as true. How is it possible to do this? How is it possible to make statements about objects *a priori*, which must be true whatever the objects may be? To this Kant replies in effect that it is possible because there are certain conditions to which all objects must conform in order to become objects of experience; and a large part of the first Critique is an analysis of these conditions. We need not follow him into it, and may content ourselves with a reference to the three features which enter into Schopenhauer's scheme. These are space, time and causality. All objects of experience must exist in space and time, they must have a cause and must issue in effects. Any object not in space, not in time, and not subject to causality, could not be experienced by us: it would be nothing for us at all. This is the first part of the argument.

But these are only conditions which objects must obey if they are to enter into our experience and be known, they are not conditions binding on things-in-themselves. They can be applied only to objects which, as it were, are willing to submit to them. The mind is legislating and laying down rules, telling objects what they must do if they are to enter experience; and the legislation can only apply to objects which are prepared to be dictated to, and which will do what they are told. If the mind were dealing with completely independent things, with things-in-themselves, it could not take up this commanding

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

attitude, it would have to follow things and conform to them, it could not go beyond what is given. Consequently, if in respect of those important features mentioned above, space, time and causality, the mind does not follow objects but requires them to follow it and conform to it, then the objects in question cannot be things-in-themselves. That is the second part of the argument.

The conclusion is that the world of experience, in space, in time, and full of objects bound together in causal relations, is a mind-dependent world ; and although it seems real, and behaves in an orderly fashion, and can be called empirically real, it is not ultimately so ; it is not a world of things-in-themselves, the world as it would be apart from our intellectual interference with it.

Schopenhauer accepts this point of view, but he tries to improve and simplify the argument in favour of it, and in so doing he returns in certain respects to the philosophy of Berkeley. Subject and object, he says, are correlative to one another, they depend on one another, and neither can exist apart from the other. If there is no object of knowledge, there cannot be a knowing subject ; if there is no knowing subject, there cannot be a known object. But the whole world of experience, with all it contains, consists only of known objects, and it exists only in experience. "The world is my idea", says Schopenhauer, something presented to my consciousness, and ideas and presentations have no existence apart from the mind. Until the first mind appeared there was no world of experience at all, only a world of things-in-themselves. From which it follows that the world of experience — the world as idea — is not ultimately real ; it is not a thing-in-itself.

Of course, for Schopenhauer, as for Kant, the world as idea, the phenomenal world as it may be called, has to the uninitiated characteristics which give it all the appearance of a real world. It is orderly and organised, it consists of bodies in space and time, rigidly governed by causal laws, and admitting no arbitrariness or incoherence. If it is in some respects, as Schopenhauer insists, like the stuff that dreams are made on, it is a remarkably



## NIETZSCHE

consistent and persistent dream, where things happen in accordance with the most unbending laws that the human mind can devise. For Schopenhauer, as for Kant, the phenomenal world is a realm of necessity, not of caprice and fancy : the world of the thing-in-itself, the noumenal world, and it alone, is free and unconstrained.

We are not called upon to pass judgment on this view here. Let us rather take up another attitude ; let us overcome our natural reluctance to accept a view so subversive of our ordinary notions, and apparently so much in conflict with common-sense, and let us put ourselves as far as we are able at the Kantian point of view.

If we do so, we are at once led to ask : What has happened to the real world, to the world of things-in-themselves ? To this question several replies have been given, and of these three may be mentioned. According to the first of them, the real world has disappeared : there is no such thing. Nothing exists except the phenomenal world, and it is an illusion. This form of scepticism we may set aside for the present.

The other two views maintain the existence of the real world undiminished, but they differ radically in their conception of the relation between it and the phenomenal world. The difference arises quite simply in the following way. There are two things we can do. On the one hand, we may try to bridge the gulf which has broken out between the world of experience and the real world, by changing our conception of the real world ; or we may maintain the original uncritical conception of reality with which we began, and let the two worlds fall apart. If we adopt the first of these alternatives, we may be led to some form of objective Idealism like that of Hegel, according to which the world, in appearing to us and taking on the forms through which alone it can be known, is not falsifying its nature but revealing itself. If we adopt the second alternative, we shall have to maintain that the real world remains outside our intellectual grasp, that, in effect, it is something quite other than the world we know, and conversely that we have no knowledge

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

of the real world. This is, in general, the view taken by Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer emphasises the failure of the understanding to grasp the essence of things. Science, he thinks, may be divided into two parts. The first, which he calls Morphology, states and describes the various kinds of things that there are in the world, "the various permanent, organised, and therefore definitely determined forms in the constant change of individuals". The second, Etiology, is concerned with cause and effect, and shows how "one change necessarily conditions and brings forth a certain other change". Neither of these activities or branches of knowledge, however, can give us what we require. Morphology presents us with many forms, but it does not explain them; they are there, and we can recognise them, but they "remain always strange to us, and stand before us like hieroglyphics which we do not understand". Nor is Etiology more successful. It tells us, at most, when phenomena will appear and disappear, but it throws no light upon their inner nature. Knowledge thus, in the strict scientific sense of the term, is confined to the surface of things, to mere phenomena; it cannot penetrate beneath the surface to reality.<sup>1</sup>

This argument implies, of course, that there is something behind the surface show, some inner reality; and the question may well be asked, What have we to do with it? If it entirely escapes our understanding, what right have we even to assert its existence? The reply which Schopenhauer makes to this challenge is one of the most characteristic features of his system.

Reality has two sides, an outer and an inner. The outer is that which we have briefly considered, the world as idea. But this is only the secondary and derivative aspect, dependent on the functioning of individual human brains. The other aspect is primary, permanent, indestructible, and constitutes the ultimate reality of everything. Consequently, it constitutes our own ultimate reality. But, says Schopenhauer, we can apprehend ourselves in two ways. We are objects in space, and as such can

<sup>1</sup> *World as Will and Idea*, § 17.

## NIETZSCHE

be found there and studied like any other objects. But we are also aware of ourselves from within, and are immediately conscious of our own being, as living, striving, willing. A number of terms might be used to denote this inner aspect; from them Schopenhauer selects the word will. Outwardly, he asserts, we are bodies, inwardly will. These two, however, body and will, are not two separate things connected as cause and effect — such a view would place both in the phenomenal world. On the contrary, they are the same thing from different aspects, the outside and the inside, the phenomenon and the noumenon.

Schopenhauer quickly extends this view. The principles of scientific knowledge — space, time and causality, comprehensively summed up together by Schopenhauer as the law of sufficient reason — do not apply to the thing-in-itself. The world of things-in-themselves is not broken up into parts, there are not many instances of the thing-in-itself, acting and reacting on one another. The real is not fractured by the differences which time and space introduce into the phenomenal world, and in a profound sense it is an undivided unity. Thus the reality which appears inwardly to the individual as his own will is the same reality as that which appears in all things. Hence in the will, the immediate experience of oneself, there is revealed the inner nature of things. All things inwardly and ultimately are will.

This position must not be misunderstood. The will which is thus the reality in and behind all nature, is not to be regarded as in itself conscious, much less self-conscious. In us it reaches consciousness, but that is not its general character. The will is prior to the understanding, and the latter is merely an adjunct to it, a means which it develops at a certain level. Intrinsically the will is blind, and ultimately, even in the human being, it is purposeless.

This conception of the essential and incurable blindness of the will provides the metaphysical justification for Schopenhauer's pessimism. Life is not controlled by reason; reason does not provide the ends of existence, but only the means to ends which

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

spring from the will itself. And in the last resort these ends are only apparent, and have no value. Reason, as it were, helps us to go to the place to which we want to go, but there is no reason why we should want to go there ; and if we do reach it we are no better off than before. Human life, thus, in the last analysis, is completely purposeless ; it has no more goal to achieve, no more finality to reach, than the waves of the sea, and it is merely one form of the endless, pointless, striving and change which, for Schopenhauer, is characteristic of nature in all its forms, from the highest to the lowest. "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

If this picture of unmixed gloom had been all that Schopenhauer had to offer, his importance would have been small, but it is only one part of his view, and much of his influence is derived from the other side of his philosophy, which provides a gospel of salvation from the miseries of this present evil world.

There are two ways, according to Schopenhauer, by which we may attain to happiness. One of these is found in the perception of beauty, the other in the moral life. We may consider them separately.

Ordinary scientific knowledge, dependent on what we may call the Understanding, is incapable of freeing us from the ever-recurring wants of the insatiable will. The understanding in its ordinary use is the servant of the will, and since the root of the evil lies in the will itself, the Understanding is unable to cure it. In order to reach happiness, we must, in some way, escape from the ever-turning wheel and have rest.

It is possible, Schopenhauer thinks, for this to happen. The intelligence, if it is powerful enough, may cease to be dominated by temporary needs and finite purposes, and may, for a time at least, be a master in its own house. Freed from the dominion of the will, it can get beneath the surface of things, and come nearer to the thing-in-itself. This, Schopenhauer thinks, is achieved in the perception of beauty.

The will, the thing-in-itself, is objectified, according to Schopenhauer, in two stages. The first stage produces those

## NIETZSCHE

forms of existence which were referred to above in connection with morphology, and the second presents these forms in space and time. Space and time are not constitutive principles of things, they are merely principles of multiplicity, and determine where, when and how often a kind of thing appears, how many there are of it : they do not touch its essence or nature. The constitutive principles which lie behind space and time and which enter into the appearance, Schopenhauer, following Plato, calls Ideas, and these Ideas stand, as it were, half-way between the phenomenal and the noumenal world. They are, says Schopenhauer, the first objectification of the thing-in-itself. Taken abstractly, however, as ordinary conceptions are taken, as instruments to finite purposes and subordinated to the service of the will, they do not free us from the wheel of life. But they can be taken in another way. They are present in things and can be perceived there. If we look at an object apart from all the considerations of our ordinary needs and apart from the context in which the object happens to stand, and see within it the Idea, the constitutive form, then we have an apprehension of beauty which lifts us above time and space, and frees us from the dominion of the finite will. This liberated mind, which perceives the individual object, not as a mere individual thing, but as an embodiment of a timeless or eternal nature, and apprehends it not as a means to any purpose, but for the sake of the Idea it shows forth, is itself more than an individual. Subject and object, Schopenhauer tells us, are correlative, and when the object becomes thus universal, the subject takes on a new character, and becomes universal also. In perceiving beauty, whether in nature or in art, the individual mind loses some of its limitation and becomes universal.

It follows from Schopenhauer's view that there is beauty everywhere. Beauty is not the prerogative of certain objects, natural or artificial, although there are some objects in which it is found and recognised more readily than in others, objects in which the task of ignoring the momentary circumstances and setting aside the urge of desire is made easy for us. But the Idea *can* be found in anything, and, properly taken, every object

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

can be seen as beautiful. The mind which can achieve this vision, and especially the mind which can present the vision to others, Schopenhauer calls genius.

There is one exception, however, to this conception of beauty, one form of art which the formula does not fit, viz. music ; and in facing the problem which thus arises Schopenhauer has all the merit of boldness. Music is not the perception of Ideas, and it approaches reality even more closely than the Ideas do ; it is a direct expression, without any mediation, of the will, of the thing-in-itself. Since the same reality is presented in music and in the other arts, there is a parallelism between them, which Schopenhauer is careful to trace ; but there is no identity. Music goes straight to the heart of things, and therein lies its universal appeal. It does not give knowledge, but while it lasts, it frees us from space, time and causality, from finite need and purpose, and brings us into direct contact with the unchanging real.

The other means of escape from the tyranny of the will is through the moral life, and for the present a brief statement of Schopenhauer's view will suffice. For him sympathy, feeling with others, is the foundation of morality. As one would expect from the general tenor of his doctrine, Schopenhauer regards egoism as the natural and inevitable basis of behaviour, and even in the moral life that basis is not abandoned. Sympathy is a form of egoism, but it is a form where the difference between individuals has disappeared, and where the agent feels that what happens to others happens to himself also. Schopenhauer is not making the cynical suggestion that we feel sympathy for others because of some benefit to ourselves as individuals ; he maintains on the contrary that in true sympathy we leave the limited individual point of view behind altogether. In moral action egoism and altruism become directly one, and it is this direct union of these opposites which gives Schopenhauer's teaching its peculiar character, and enables him to contend that in goodness the individual escapes from the dictates of the individual will and attains to reality and rest.

## NIETZSCHE

But in the end Schopenhauer withdraws a little. The perception of beauty cannot be maintained for ever. It comes in moments of glory which compensate for much of the suffering of existence. But the universal self which thus appears is still limited by the pressure of ordinary life ; ordinary needs return and the vision fades.

So, too, moral action provides times when we rise above our individuality and are brought close to reality. But these times also are fleeting, and the main part of the life of the good man is still occupied by those wants, and needs, and dissatisfactions which are the routine of existence.

Full salvation, therefore, cannot be attained unless we renounce all the purposes of ordinary life, hold ourselves loose to all its pleasures as well as its pains, strive after none of its satisfactions, and live as ascetics and saints.

It may be worth while in concluding this chapter to compare in its ultimate import the view which we have just outlined, with another view, which in one form or another we shall have frequently before us in the sequel. This latter view is traditional in our culture, going at least as far back as Socrates, and is perhaps the prevailing tendency in Western philosophy. It thinks of the True, the Good, the Beautiful, as distinct but concordant aspects of one reality, and believes that the pursuit of them follows convergent paths which ultimately unite. It was expressed in Socrates' dictum that Virtue is Knowledge, taken not in the mistaken sense that virtue can be taught in a classroom, but in the profounder one that knowledge involves the whole mind and that the Good when truly seen is so fair that men cannot but follow it. More than two thousand years later it became even more fully explicit in Hegel's belief that the real is the rational. It is a tendency which, in spite of evil uses by evil men, accepts science as worthy of study, not only because it ministers to man's needs, but also because it widens his purposes, informs his aims, and shows new potencies of happiness. It believes also that the highest good lies not in what is private and exclusive, but in what is common and open to all men ; and that the Kingdom of

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

Heaven is not a distant other-worldly refuge for the *élite*, but should come on earth and establish itself among ordinary men. It is something wider than any philosophy, less dogmatic than any creed ; it is a hope, an assumption. It has guided many thinkers of many schools, giving a sober but unshaken optimism to their teaching, and making them regard knowledge as a light which, in spite of many shadows and obscurities, will issue in full day and shine on all the earth.

With this attitude of mind Schopenhauer is sharply in conflict. For him knowledge does not lead to reality, and does not give peace. Beauty and Goodness, it is true, take us towards the thing-in-itself, and away from the miseries and illusion of life, but they are only difficult mountain paths, not broad highways where all may go ; and it is doubtful whether they can carry the traveller to his journey's end. In contrast with the cry for "more life and fuller", Schopenhauer preaches the renunciation of life, and declares that it is "best not to be". Over his world there is never a clear sky or a bright sun. The heavens are covered by murky thunder-clouds, through rifts in which a few rays of broken light gleam fitfully on snow-clad peaks, leaving in deeper gloom the valleys and the plains and all the dwellings of men.



## VI

### MOODS

IN his review of his two years' studentship at Leipzig, Nietzsche tells us how, at the end of October 1865, he first came across Schopenhauer's writings, and what the effect was on him.

"In young people, if for the rest they have a tendency to *δυσκολία* [Discontent], ill-humours and annoyances of a personal kind are wont readily to take on a general character. At that time I was hanging in the air with a number of painful experiences and disappointments, without help, without fundamental principles, without hope, and without one friendly memory. To fashion for myself a suitable life of my own was my effort from morning till night ; to that end I broke off the last of the supports which bound me to my past at Bonn : I tore the bond between me and that association [*i.e. Franconia*]. In the happy seclusion of my rooms I was able to gather myself together, and when I did meet friends, it was only Mushacke and von Gersdorff, who for their part went about with similar views. Imagine now what effect the reading of Schopenhauer's main work must produce in such circumstances. One day I happened to find this book in old Rohn's second-hand book shop, picked it up without knowing anything about it and turned over the leaves. I know not what daemon whispered to me : 'Take this book home with you.' At all events it happened contrary to my usual habit not to be too hasty in buying books. At home I threw myself with the treasure I had acquired into the corner of the sofa and began to let that forceful gloomy genius work upon me. Here where every line cried renunciation, denial, resignation, here I saw a mirror in which I desecrated the world, life and my own soul in frightful grandeur. Here there gazed at me the full, unmotivated sunlike eye of art, here I saw sickness and healing, exile

## MOODS

and a place of refuge, hell and heaven. The need to know one's self, even to gnaw at one's self, laid a powerful hold on me. To this very day there remain as evidences for me of that sudden change the uneasy melancholic pages of my diary for that time, with their useless self-accusations and their desperate looking upward for the healing and reshaping of the whole kernel of man. Dragging all my qualities and aspirations in front of the Forum of a gloomy self-contempt, I was bitter, unjust and unbridled in the hatred directed against myself. Even bodily penances were not lacking. For example, for fourteen days on end, I forced myself to go to bed only at two o'clock and to leave it exactly at six o'clock again. A nervous irritability overcame me, and who knows to what length of folly I might not have proceeded, had not the enticements of life, of vanity, and the compulsion of regular studies worked in the opposite direction."<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche soon began to proclaim his newly found theory of pessimism, and his letters home were filled with echoes of the doctrine of despair. Having settled down in the University, he writes home to say so, but immediately begins to moralise. "We have once more got back into the grooves of ordinary work, thoughts, drudgery, recreations", he says; "how important the day is for me now, and how much is decided or must be decided in the narrow chambers of the brain."<sup>2</sup> This is bad enough, but there is worse behind. "Do you really bear so lightly this completely contradictory existence, where nothing is clear except that it is unclear?" Then, after a few more generalities, he commends resignation as preached by primitive Christianity. Knowing that life is miserable, and that its allurements enslave us, we should abstain from the good things of life, be mean to ourselves and loving to others. "Does life then become bearable?" he asks. "Certainly," he replies, "because its burden ever grows less, and no bonds fetter us to it. It is bearable, because it may be cast aside without pain."

Knowing her Fritz, the good mother thought that he had been upset by the non-arrival of a box of books, but even after the

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 46 f.

<sup>2</sup> Nov. 1865.

## NIETZSCHE

books turned up the letters continued in the same strain. So she protested. She told him that they in Naumburg wished to hear of his doings and life in Leipzig, but that they could dispense with the discussions of general philosophy. Elizabeth, however, thought that her hero could do no wrong, and when Fritz came home for the Christmas holidays he found her wearing an unwontedly solemn face, and uttering profound observations about the difficulties and obscurities of existence. At first he was puzzled, but when he realised what had happened, he confessed that he preferred her unconverted.

Discouraged at home, the preacher carried his doctrine abroad. His only two intimate friends of this period, Mushacke and von Gersdorff, soon became adherents of the new gospel, and the three felt themselves united by the bond of a common faith. Then they looked round for others who might also be brought within the fold. One such convert Nietzsche described as worthy of note. This was a lad Romundt, from Stade in Hanover. He had a shrill voice, which jarred on the ear at first and which offended Nietzsche until he learned to ignore it. "He was in an unhappy state", says Nietzsche. "In no direction did his talented nature show him a definite aim to strive for. The elements of an investigator, poet, philosopher, were uncomfortably mixed, so that he consumed himself in eternal discontent."<sup>1</sup> He was easily persuaded of the inherent misery of existence and of the salvation to be found for the *élite* in art and the ascetic life.

The good news, of course, was soon communicated to Deussen by letter; but he proved to have a mind of his own, and the critical attitude which he adopted gave rise to a passing coolness between him and Nietzsche. In the spring of 1870, however, he too became a believer, and Nietzsche wrote to him in joy "Now at last a long-continued estrangement between us has broken down, and after it we now both speak the same language and no longer attach different meanings to the same words. Perhaps", Nietzsche cannot help adding, "you might have been

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 51.

## MOODS

spared the rather toilsome, rough and indirect road, and come by a more natural and gentle path to the higher level of culture which you have now reached, if we had always been together. At least you are the last of all my friends to have found the way to wisdom." Deussen, however, if tardy, proved one of the stoutest of the recruits, and became in the end Schopenhauer's most brilliant philosophic follower and the editor of the standard edition of his works.

With others Nietzsche was not so successful, and he mentions one, Wissler, on whom the propaganda had no effect. Nietzsche found him a good-natured, rather simple soul, who was easily captured by short-lived enthusiasms, and who could not maintain himself for any length of time at the required pitch of gloom. He preferred hobnobbing with children and ordinary people, and was most at home in a simple rustic life. In the end Nietzsche gave him up as lacking in philosophic depth and unwilling to take the trouble to prepare his mind for deep thought.

Nietzsche's general outlook at this time is well shown by a letter to von Gersdorff dated 7th April 1866. After referring to the work on which he was engaged, he says: "Three things are my recreations, but rare recreations, my Schopenhauer, Schumann's music, and lastly lonely walks". He tells of one such walk, taken when a thunderstorm was brewing. As the heavy threatening clouds gathered he hastened to a small hut on the top of a hill, where he found a man, watched by his son, killing two kids. Then there was a flash of lightning, and the storm broke, accompanied by a heavy downfall of hail. Stirred by the violence, and perhaps also moved by the sight of the knife and the spilled blood, Nietzsche felt strangely thrilled and exalted. He rejoiced in the demonstration of power, free from all considerations of good and evil,—“pure will, without the troubles of the intellect. How strong! How happy!” The disciple is not quite orthodox here, but for the moment we may pass over the heresy which is peeping through.

The letter then goes on to discuss a sermon which Nietzsche had recently heard on the text, Christianity, the Faith which

## NIETZSCHE

has overcome the World. As a plea for Christianity he rejects it, but in it he finds something, perhaps much, with which he could agree. "If Christianity", he says, "means belief in a historical event or a historical person, I have nothing to do with this Christianity. But if it means, in short, need for salvation, then I can treasure it, and not be offended when it tries to discipline the philosophers. . . ."

He ends with a complaint of his inability to find a satisfactory pulpit for his gospel. "It is of course extremely annoying for us", he says, "to hold back our still young and powerful Schopenhauer thoughts half-expressed in this way, and always to have this difference between theory and practice as a burden on our hearts. For this I know of no consolation; on the contrary I am in need of it."

In Nietzsche's writings at this period, and indeed at any other, there is little discussion of the purely theoretic basis on which Schopenhauer's theory rests: it was not this side of the doctrine which impressed him. Indeed he may have been influenced as much in this regard by Lange as by Schopenhauer. Lange's *History of Materialism*, written mainly from a Kantian point of view, appeared in 1866, and Nietzsche read it at once. In a letter to von Gersdorff, dated September 1866, he sums up Lange's conclusions in three propositions:

1. The world of sense is the product of our organisation.
2. Our visible (bodily) organs, like all other parts of the phenomenal world, are only images of an unknown object.
3. Our real organisation thus remains just as unknown to us as real external things. We have before us only the product of both.

Thus the true being of the thing, the thing-in-itself, is not only unknown to us, but even the conception of it is neither more nor less than the last offspring of an opposition conditioned by our organisation, concerning which we do not know whether it has any meaning at all outside our experience. Consequently, thinks Lange, leave philosophers free, provided that henceforth

## MOODS

they edify us. Art is free, even in the realm of conceptions. Who will contradict a proposition of Beethoven, and who will charge Raphael's Madonna with error ?

You see that even from this most severe critical standpoint our Schopenhauer remains to us. If philosophy is art, then even Haym may hide his face before Schopenhauer ; if philosophy is to edify, I do not know of any philosopher who edifices more than Schopenhauer."

Two points are worthy of note in this letter. In the first place, Nietzsche summarises from Lange, rather clumsily it is true, but apparently with agreement, a view which would render invalid the greater part of Schopenhauer's teaching. The thing-in-itself, we are told, is unknowable. We expect that : but there is more. The very conception of it is an idea which arises only within experience, and is a consequence of the way in which we happen to be made. There is no reason to believe that it has any application beyond experience. This, of course, is Kantian doctrine, and if it is accepted it provides an effective barrier to Schopenhauer's assertion that the will is the reality behind everything and the source of experience itself. There is no sign, however, that Nietzsche recognised the incompatibility of the two theories ; on the contrary, he thinks that Lange leaves the way open for " our Schopenhauer ".

Secondly, it is obvious that what Nietzsche expects from Schopenhauer is not pure science, but something which will satisfy his emotional needs. He is prepared to concede that philosophy should be regarded as art and valued for the edification it brings. We may therefore ask why Nietzsche found Schopenhauer so edifying.

The answer to this question has already been suggested, but it may be amplified.

The feeling of inferiority and the sense of sin are not far apart, and the cure of both — at least one form of cure — involves the confession of guilt. But confession is painful, and if it is consciously incomplete, it is apt to lead to further and greater distress. Schopenhauer provides a ready-made confession, which

## NIETZSCHE

leaves nothing untold, for it declares that all life is futile and wrong. There is satisfaction in having one's confession thus made for one and covered by a formula which includes all one's acts and those of other men also in an all-embracing sweep. In this way a pessimistic philosophy like that of Schopenhauer contains some of the elements commonly reserved to religious experience.

Further, religious confession is intended to lead to repentance, a permanent abandoning of old acts and old values. Schopenhauer's philosophy has this element also. It emphasises the futility of ordinary experience and requires its follower to turn his back on all the seeming pleasures of the unregenerate will.

But now a difference arises. Of course there are some religions, such as primitive Buddhism, where this renunciation is carried to the end, and where the highest form of life is one which has abandoned everything, and, in complete indifference, awaits final release. Such an element, as we have seen, is present in Schopenhauer's teaching. But primitive Buddhism is hardly typical and most religions demand, and offer, a reinstatement of positive values in life, here or elsewhere, in a form which the heart of man can appreciate. Schopenhauer, it is true, tries to meet this demand also : and in this life, by means of art and morals, he offers a vision and experience of reality, which quiets the restlessness of desire and brings peace. But the method by which Schopenhauer seeks to achieve this end differs radically from that of such a religion as Christianity. Christianity offers a redeemer. Man cannot save himself, and apart from the free unmerited grace of God, he is lost. In accepting the gift of grace, man must surrender himself wholly and receive a new spirit and a new nature throughout. Of course, in the great majority of cases, this attitude is not fully realised in practice, but it is a genuine part not only of Christian belief but of the experience of the saints.

In Schopenhauer's philosophy, on the other hand, the believer must save himself. By his intrinsic merit he must raise himself above the futilities of life, and by his own artistic and moral

capacity attain to the good. Thus even in his general and apparently all-embracing confession, the follower of Schopenhauer keeps something back, an inherent power and tendency which requires no repentance. He is liable, therefore, to be infected by what the Christian would call "spiritual pride". Salvation is for the few : those few have not been chosen by the mercy of God, but have redeemed themselves by their own might.

Perhaps the most alluring and insidious form of this spiritual pride — for such it is, whether it is justified or not — is that which looks for salvation to the perception of beauty. Morality, although highly desirable, is so often commended, and, theoretically at least, is within the reach of so many, that it is apt to appear extremely dull. The power to perceive and to create beauty, on the other hand, implies something out of the ordinary range, and belongs properly to the man of genius.

Moreover, Schopenhauer teaches that the man of genius is apt, by virtue of his very good qualities, to be out of touch with ordinary men and ordinary things, and to be clumsy in dealing with the affairs of the world. Taking a term from student slang, Schopenhauer calls the ordinary man a Philistine. The Philistine is the *ἄμουσος ἀνὴρ*, the man without the Muses, without taste, unpolished, rude, boorish. In spite of a human brain he lives more or less at an animal level, and has no spiritual needs and enjoyments. The intelligence in which he exceeds the brute is expended on a dreary round which never satisfies : dances, theatres, social gatherings, cards, games of chance, horses, women, drink, travel. When higher things are brought to his notice, he resents their intrusion, for they give him a feeling of inferiority, and he has a deep distrust and even dislike for the man of genius. From which it is easy for the true believer to conclude that, if he is not at home with ordinary men, the fault lies in them. The futility of the world is their futility rather than his own : he is the one just man, who needs no repentance.

All this is heady doctrine for a young man, conscious of much inward power, out of touch with his fellows, taking himself and life with grim seriousness, and clamouring in weakness and



## NIETZSCHE

failure for strength, independence and justification. "You are strong," Schopenhauer hints; "your apparent failure is the fault of others, not of yourself. The times are out of joint, but if you are true to yourself, you will win salvation."

If this gospel is accepted and preached, we must expect to hear from the missionary about culture, and about the gulf between the man of culture and the crowd. And when we examine the conception of culture offered to us, we shall expect to find that it is intrinsically for the few, highly individual in its content, remote from the common pursuits of men, and independent of the relationships of ordinary social life.

During the two years which Nietzsche spent at Leipzig, maturing, acquiring a command of the classical languages and literature, absorbing a philosophy, and endeavouring to bring his thoughts and life into some kind of unity, events were occurring which had a disturbing effect on him. After his first semester his friends began to leave him. Mushacke went off to Berlin, and von Gersdorff disappeared to Nuremberg on military service. Then the Austro-Prussian war broke out. Leipzig was Prussian in outlook, but the Saxon sympathies of the country round it were on the Austrian side. Nietzsche, who came from Prussian Saxony, regarded himself as a Prussian, and showed himself as naively patriotic as the most unphilosophic man. Writing home in May 1866, he congratulates himself on keeping war speculations out of his letter, "for a Kriegsrat [a council of war] is a gruesome beast", but he ends with a jingle of verse in which he conveys the hint that he may soon be a Prussian grenadier. He volunteered for service, but was rejected on account of his eyesight.

In June, just after the outbreak of war and before the main battle had been joined, he wrote home again. "I hope that you have been getting a newspaper and following keenly the decisive events which recent weeks have produced. The danger in which Prussia lies is tremendously great; that it should be able, even by a complete victory, to carry out its policy, is quite impossible. To found a unitary German state in this revolutionary way is a

## MOODS

clever trick of Bismarck's. He has courage and ruthless consistency, but he under-estimates the moral force in the people. Anyhow, the last moves on the chess-board were favourable : above all he succeeded in pushing a large, if not the greater, part of the blame on to Austria.

Our position is simple. When a house is on fire, one does not ask first who is to blame for the fire, but puts it out. Prussia is on fire, what has to be done is to save it. That is the general feeling."

On 3rd July the decisive battle of Königgrätz, or Sadowa, took place, and in the same month — the exact date is not given — Nietzsche wrote to von Gersdorff. Von Gersdorff's brother, having taken part in the Prussian advance through Bohemia, had been wounded, and Nietzsche got some news of him from a soldier in the hospital in Leipzig. "The soldier said, they could not keep up with his impetuosity : he was always on ahead, and was wounded by the cut of a sabre in a fight with three. This will have been a time of great excitement for you. But we must be proud to have such an army, yes even — *horribile dictu* — to possess such a government, which does not merely put the national programme on paper but maintains it with a vast expenditure of money and blood, even against the great French tempter, *Louis le diable*."

It is of some interest to note the extent of Nietzsche's patriotism at this time. Bismarck was endeavouring to thrust Austria out of Germany, to deprive France of her influence there, and to make Prussia supreme. Such a plan, of course, was not welcome to France or Austria, and the smaller and medium states in Germany regarded it on the whole with dislike. They did not wish to be dominated by either party, and preferred to retain their independence and influence. A representative of one of them, the Saxon minister Beust, proposed a compromise, according to which there were to be three main powers in Germany, viz. Prussia, Austria, and a combination of the middle and smaller states acting together as a unit, and holding the balance between the other two. But the war was altering the situation ; for the outcome of it was virtually decided, and the risk of French inter-

## NIETZSCHE

vention had come to nothing. Nietzsche divined Bismarck's purpose and approved of it. Prussia was to become the supreme power in Germany, and Germany was to be united under Prussian control. To achieve this end the spirit of German unity must be developed, presumably by a foreign war. "A war against France", says Nietzsche, "must indeed call forth a unity of feeling in Germany; and if the populations are one, then Herr von Beust, together with all the middle state princes, can get himself embalmed. For their time is past.

At no time in the last fifty years have we been so near the fulfilment of our German hopes. I am beginning gradually to realise that there was indeed no other milder way than the ghastly one of a war of annihilation."<sup>1</sup>

But the war with France was still in the future. The political fever died down after the Treaty of Prague on 23rd August, the life of the city went on much as before, and when the actress Hedwig Raabe visited Leipzig in the summer of 1866, she carried all by storm. Nietzsche, like most of the other students, fell in love with her, from a distance. As a token of regard he sent her a few songs, and it may not be without interest for us to see him in an unusual mood, bending at the joints, rather stiffly perhaps, and bowing with a self-deprecating but ingratiating smile.

"My first wish is that you will not take amiss the trifling dedication of trifling songs from me. Nothing is further from me than the wish by this dedication to draw your attention to my personality. When other people indicate their raptures by hand and mouth in the theatre, I do it by a few songs; others might express their meaning still better, more clearly, in poems. But all have only one feeling: to indicate to you how happy they have been for a short part of their existence, how cordially they cherish within them the memory of such a sunny glimpse of a perfect life." Then, naturally enough, he brings himself a little, though not too far, into the picture, with a suitable touch of pathos. "Very deeply do I, and surely all with me, honour your performances: with the sweetness and the pain with which my

<sup>1</sup> July 1866.

## MOODS

own childhood comes before my soul, as one who is lost who did yet once exist, do I think on your life-like and ever kind-hearted appearances (all the more so, the less life offers me)." And so it continues, ending thus : " Finally, it is my wish that even out of the tones of the accompanying songs you may hear these warm and grateful feelings ".<sup>1</sup>

Fräulein Raabe, however, was only a bird of passage, and it is doubtful if the composer treasured her memory for long. Whether she sang the songs or not is unknown.

A very different experience came to Nietzsche a little later in the year. Cholera broke out in the city, and he, among others, fled from it. It made a deep impression on him, and twice he believed that he was attacked by the disease, each time curing himself, he imagined, by constantly drinking hot water and inducing heavy perspiration. Once he spent a night in a house where there lay the body of a victim awaiting burial, and the horror of it did not soon leave him. But the epidemic passed over, and although the University opened late on account of it, it was soon forgotten.

Early in January 1867 Aunt Rosalie died, and in the same month Nietzsche received word of the death of von Gersdorff's elder brother. In a letter to Gersdorff Nietzsche contrasts the two deaths and offers what consolation he can on the basis of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Aunt Rosalie, frail and old, had played her part and finished a life full of good works. The only pain he felt in her death came from the severing of old ties. But Gersdorff was a young man, full of vigour, a hero of the war, and in an uncertain world a " guiding star " to his younger brother. Nietzsche does not minimise the loss. " Perhaps ", he says, " his death is the greatest pain that could affect you." Then he goes on : " Ah, my friend, you have now — I note it in the tone of your letter — yourself experienced within you why our Schopenhauer praised suffering and trouble as a glorious gift, as the *δεύτερος πλοῦς* [the alternative path], to the denial of the will. You have also experienced the purifying, inwardly

June 1866.

## NIETZSCHE

quietening, force of pain. It is a time in which you can test what is true in Schopenhauer's teaching. If the fourth book of his masterpiece makes a hateful, troubled, burdensome impression on you now, if it has not the power to raise you up and to lead you from the violent outward pain to that sad but happy state of mind which lays hold of us when we hear noble music, that state of mind in which we see the earthly shells fall away from us ; then may I have nothing more to do with this philosophy. He who is filled with the pain can, and only he may, say the final word on such things : we others, standing on the stream of things and of life, merely looking towards that denial of the will as a Fortunate Isle, we cannot judge whether the consolation of such a philosophy is sufficient also for the time of deep affliction."

But life at this time was not all calamity and separation. In his third semester, Nietzsche became president and acknowledged founder of his philological club, and he entered Ritschl's seminar. He was getting to know the authorities in his subject, and in addition to Ritschl came for a time into close contact with two of them, Dindorf and Tischendorf. But more important to him than his connection with either of these was his growing friendship with the brilliant, temperamental Erwin Rohde. Rohde, who came from Hamburg, was a year younger than Nietzsche, and in his school days had proved a difficult and self-willed pupil. Fortunately he fell into the hands of a discriminating schoolmaster who realised that, although argumentative and insistent on being given a reason, he was not really disobedient. The boy expressed his views on most subjects openly, clearly, bluntly ; he was witty, a good mimic and excelled in copying peculiarities of speech. He spent the summer semester of 1865 at Bonn studying Classics, and took part in the Cologne musical festival where Nietzsche was also a performer. He too for a time joined a *Burschenschaft*, and must have been as little enthralled by it as Nietzsche was. After the Ritschl-Jahn quarrel he followed Ritschl to Leipzig, although, at first, he did not mix with the other Bonn men who had come with him. He joined Nietzsche's

## MOODS

philological club when it was formed, and became a member of Ritschl's seminar. He did not come into very close contact with Ritschl, but was more and more attracted to Nietzsche. He argued with him, went to concerts with him, learned to ride with him, and studied philosophy with him. He started from Plato, but of course he soon became a devotee of Schopenhauer. Gradually the two young men became inseparable and lost touch with most of their other acquaintances.

Nietzsche's own account, written at the time, is as follows : " In a letter to myself Rohde once used the image that we two in the last semester had to a certain extent sat on an insulator. This is quite correct, but it only struck me after the semester was over. Quite unintentionally, but guided by a sure instinct, we spent by far the greater part of the day together. We did not do much work in the vulgar sense of the term, and nevertheless we count the various days we have lived through as gain. This is the only time up till now that I have found by experience that a friendship which forms itself has an ethical-philosophical background. Usually there are similar paths of study which men follow together. But we two were in fairly well-separated fields of science, and were united only in irony and mockery of philological manners and vanities. Generally we were at loggerheads, indeed there was an unusual number of things about which we did not agree. But as soon as the discussion reached the depths, the difference of opinion became silent and there rang out a quiet and full harmony."<sup>1</sup>

At this time Rohde's friendship meant more to Nietzsche than that of any other person. Gersdorff was a valued and faithful friend, but in the letters from Nietzsche to Rohde, now and for some time to come, there is a greater intimacy than is to be found even in those to Gersdorff. Nietzsche can write to Rohde in a frivolous vein, with humorous exaggeration, knowing that he will not be misunderstood, that the right discount will be made, and the serious undercurrent appreciated at its true value. Nietzsche expresses his loneliness to both his friends, laments his

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 61 f.

## NIETZSCHE

incapacity to form new attachments and desires both to return. But to Rohde, and to Rohde alone, does he write as to a lover, from whom separation can hardly be real.

At the end of the summer semester of 1867, Nietzsche and Rohde set out on a walking tour. "As soon as I was free", says Nietzsche, "I fled with friend Rohde into the Bohemian forest, in order to bathe my weary soul in nature, mountain and forest." After some time they reached Meiningen, where the "Futurists" of music — the followers of Wagner — were holding a festival. "The Abbé Liszt presided", says Nietzsche. "This school has now thrown itself passionately on to Schopenhauer. A symphonic poem by Hans von Bülow, 'Nirvana', contained as programme a collection of sentences from Schopenhauer: the music, however, was frightful. On the other hand, Liszt himself, in one of his sacred compositions, had found the character of that Indian Nirvana excellently, above all in his Beatitudes, *Beati sunt qui*, etc." <sup>1</sup>

After the festival was over the two young men separated, Rohde preparing to spend the next winter at Kiel, Nietzsche returning to his home in Naumburg.

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Gersdorff, 24th Nov. and 1st Dec. 1867.

## VII

### THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

At the end of the summer semester of 1867, a few days before he left Leipzig, Nietzsche put forward the suggestion that a set of essays might be presented to Ritschl by a select group of his students as a mark of esteem. The idea was accepted, among others by Rohde, and Nietzsche himself began at once to consider a suitable subject. He decided to write on the fragments falsely attributed to Democritus, a topic which was bound to lead him back to a consideration of the doctrine properly to be ascribed to that philosopher. He began to work on this subject after his walking tour with Rohde, and while his mind was full of it he set out to attend a philological congress at Halle. On the way to it, however, he found that he was required to serve his year as a so-called volunteer in the army. In view of possible coming events Germany was calling up all available men, and the standard of eyesight demanded of recruits was lowered.

Nietzsche tried to enter one of the Guards regiments at Berlin, but there was no room for him there, and in the end he was enrolled in the Horse Artillery stationed at Naumburg. From one point of view he was fortunate, for he was allowed to live at home, but he thought that he would have been better off in an infantry regiment. He did not like his military training. At times he joked about it, he bragged of his progress in riding, he even insisted on the benefit which the discipline conferred on his soul. But fundamentally it was alien to him.

"Yes, my dear friend," he wrote in a letter to Rohde, "if a daemon should ever guide you at an early morning hour, say between five and six o'clock, to Naumburg, and by chance propose to lead your steps into my neighbourhood, do not be struck dumb by the spectacle which greets your senses. Suddenly you



## NIETZSCHE

breathe the atmosphere of a stable. In the dim lantern-light forms appear. There is a scraping, neighing, brushing, knocking around you. And in the midst of it in the garb of a groom, busily employed taking away with his hands something not mentionable and not respectable, or grooming the nag with a curry comb — I shudder when I see his countenance — by the Dog, it is my own face."

Half jest — wholly earnest.

"I assure you," he goes on later, "by the aforementioned Dog, my philosophy has now an opportunity of being practically useful to me. At no moment till now have I felt a trace of depression, but very often have laughed as at something in a fairy-tale. Sometimes, too, hidden under the horse's belly, I whisper 'Help, Schopenhauer,' and when exhausted and covered with sweat I come home, I am soothed by a glance at the picture on my writing-table; or I throw open the *Parerga* which, with Byron, is more congenial to me than ever."<sup>1</sup>

But in a month or two the novelty had gone and the humorous side was not so apparent. "My dear friend," he tells Rohde, "this life of mine at present is very lonely and joyless",<sup>2</sup> and his letters show how much he yearned for freedom to return to things of the spirit.

His military training, however, came abruptly to an end. Early in March 1868, when mounting his horse, he was thrown against the pommel of the saddle and injured his breast and side. Here is the account of the accident which he gave to Rohde. "I have been suffering greatly for three weeks, and the occasion was a bagatelle. For in riding I tore some muscles in my breast, and thus had great pains, which on the same evening produced a few fainting fits. Then for ten days I lay fast in the bad sense of the word, *i.e.* motionless, as if stretched out and bound with cords, with frightful pains, constant fever, restless day and night, and an ice-pack round me. Then, in addition, as an evil companion, there came an obstinate catarrh of the stomach. Finally after these ten days incisions were made in my breast, and since

<sup>1</sup> 3rd-6th Nov. 1867.

<sup>2</sup> 1st-3rd Feb. 1868.

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

then, like Philoctetes, I have had the delight of a strong suppuration. In the tearing of those muscles much blood was displaced in the inside of my breast ; and it has changed to suppurating matter. I say too little if I say that already four or five glasses of matter have welled forth from that wound. Since that time I have got out of bed again ; but my condition is lamentable : weak as a fly, nervous as an old maid, thin as a stork.

Moreover, I have to be lifted up from a lying position ; my whole breast feels as if bound, and all ligaments, muscles and sinews are aching. The day before yesterday I was out once again in the open air ; and I dragged one leg after the other like an invalid and was tired after quarter of an hour."

The wound healed slowly, and for some time there was the fear that an operation would be necessary. Towards the end of June Nietzsche went to Halle to consult a specialist there, but after a further three weeks under his care and treatment he had so improved that the operation was unnecessary.

Nietzsche, however, did not return to military duty but remained on sick leave till his year of service had expired. In August he had his photograph taken in uniform with drawn sabre, his helmet conveniently at hand on an adjacent ornamental table. At the end of his military year he was posted to the reserve as an officer in the Landwehr, on condition that he served for another month in the spring of 1869. " Since sooner or later a war is unavoidable," he wrote, " and as there is no prospect of getting entirely free from the military fetters, the promotion to Lieutenant in the Landwehr is of the greatest value."<sup>1</sup> The war came, but not till 1870, and by that time Nietzsche was no longer a German subject.

During the period of his military service Nietzsche's enthusiasm for classical study rose to a high pitch, and he lamented his temporary inability to pursue it. Indeed much of his scanty leisure was spent in planning projects to be carried out when he regained his freedom. When on sick leave after his accident, he was able to devote himself entirely to any studies he favoured,

<sup>1</sup> To Rohde, 8th Oct. 1868.

## NIETZSCHE

and at the end of his military year he returned to Leipzig no longer as an ordinary student — a state of pupilage which he now found insupportable — but as a prospective Privatdozent, or University teacher, free to follow his own inclinations. He was high in favour with Ritschl, his essay on *The Sources of Diogenes Laertius* had received academic praise, he had won the respect of the serious students at the University, had made several useful friendships among them, and was becoming known to distinguished members of the staff. One of Leipzig's most famous scholars, Curtius, had shown himself friendly, and Curtius's wife had also made herself agreeable to Nietzsche, so that Nietzsche could tell Rohde that between himself and them there had arisen an "indestructible cheerfulness".

In returning to Leipzig, Nietzsche, who since the death of his Aunt Rosalie was in easier financial circumstances, determined to be more of a man of the world and less of a recluse than he had been in his previous two years there. "I propose", he said, "to become a bit more of a society man; in particular I have aimed at a lady of whom wonderful things are told to me, the wife of Professor Brockhaus, a sister of Richard Wagner; of whose capabilities friend Windisch (who has visited me) has an astonishing opinion. In that connection the confirmation of Schopenhauer's theory of inheritance pleases me; Wagner's other sister (formerly an actress in Dresden) is also said to be a woman of note.<sup>1</sup> The Ritschls go about almost entirely with the Brockhaus family."<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with this outlook on life Nietzsche had taken more pretentious rooms. He lodged with the professor of History, Biedermann by name, and there he found comfort and company. He was taken into the Biedermanns' own family circle and through them he had the opportunity of "making the acquaintance of a number of interesting people (such as: clever women, beautiful actresses, important writers and politicians,

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer held that intelligence is inherited through the mother, temperament through the father.

<sup>2</sup> 8th Oct. 1868.

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

etc.)”.<sup>1</sup> During this period also Nietzsche attended all the major concerts and musical performances which the city had to offer. Biedermann was the editor of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, and when he commissioned Nietzsche to report on all musical matters for his Journal, Nietzsche willingly took a seat among the other professional critics. At this time his admiration for Wagner’s music was stronger than ever, as the following statement to Rohde shows : “ Last night I was at the Euterpe, which was beginning its winter concerts, and was invigorated by the Introduction to *Tristan and Isolde* and the Overture to *Die Meistersinger*. I cannot bring myself to keep critically cool towards this music ; every fibre, every nerve thrills in me, and not for a long time have my feelings been so carried away as by the Overture just mentioned.”<sup>2</sup>

The highlight of the period in this regard was a meeting with Wagner, brought about by the friend Windisch, already referred to. Wagner, who had come to Leipzig incognito, was staying with his sister, Mrs. Brockhaus, and Nietzsche was invited to meet him one Sunday evening. At first Nietzsche was under the impression that the occasion called for ceremonial treatment, so he resolved to wear a new dress suit which the tailor had promised to deliver that very day. But when the suit arrived, late in the afternoon, the messenger unexpectedly presented the bill with it, and demanded payment. Nietzsche refused to deal with him, and proceeded to put the suit on. The messenger, however, interfered and prevented Nietzsche from dressing. Then there ensued an undignified struggle between the two, during which Nietzsche in his shirt tails tried to get his legs into the new trousers, while the messenger held on to the garments and frustrated his efforts. In the end Nietzsche gave way, and the messenger departed with the suit, refusing to surrender it until it was paid for.

Nietzsche, however, was too excited to be upset even by this untoward incident, and when he ultimately arrived at the Brockhaus’s in a less striking garb, he found only a small family party,

<sup>1</sup> To Deussen, about 20th Oct. 1868.

<sup>2</sup> 28th Oct. 1868.

where no ceremony was necessary. Here is the account of the evening which he gave to Rohde :

"Now I will tell you what this evening offered us, joys truly of such a piquant nature that even to-day I have not got back into the old groove, and can do nothing better than talk to you, my dear friend, and tell you of the 'wonderful tidings'. Before and after supper Wagner played virtually all the important parts of *Die Meistersinger*, imitating all the voices, and doing it in the highest spirits. He is, I may say, an amazingly lively and fiery man, speaking quickly, showing much wit, and making a private gathering of this sort very cheerful. Between times I had a long talk with him about Schopenhauer : oh, you will understand, what joy it was for me to hear him speak with indescribable warmth of him, saying what he owes to him, and that he is the only philosopher who has recognised the essence of music. Then he asked what attitude the professors took up to him, laughed greatly at the philosophic congress in Prague, and spoke of the 'philosophic porters'. Afterwards he read a piece of his biography, on which he is working at present, a thoroughly amusing scene from his student days at Leipzig, about which even now I can hardly think without laughing. Moreover, he writes ably and wittily."<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the evening Wagner shook hands warmly with Nietzsche and invited him to call on him again.

In the letter which has just been quoted, Nietzsche also tells of the first meeting of the Philological Club for the session. He had been asked to speak, and he used the occasion to test whether he was fitted for an academic career. "I, who need opportunities of training with academic weapons, was immediately prepared to undertake it, and had the satisfaction when I entered Zaspel's of finding a black mass of forty hearers. Romundt had been commissioned by me to attend to purely personal matters so that he could tell me what the theatrical side was like, that is to say, delivery, voice, style, arrangement, and what effect it produced. I spoke quite spontaneously, merely with the help of a

<sup>1</sup> 9th Nov. 1868.

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

small scrap of paper, and the subject, be it noted, was the Satires of Valerius and Menippus the Cynic ; and behold everything was *καλὰ λιστα*.<sup>1</sup> This academic career is quite feasible."

The opportunity to follow it came sooner than Nietzsche expected. After some indecision he had intended to take his degree and qualify for the position of Privatdozent in Leipzig at Easter 1869, but in mid-winter an inquiry came from Basle for a professor of Classical Philology. The authorities there had heard of Nietzsche, and asked Ritschl whether he was a suitable man. Ritschl summed up strongly in his favour, and with little delay the chair was offered to Nietzsche. He accepted it and took up residence in April 1869. In view of his appointment, the University of Leipzig waived the formalities usually attached to graduating and to qualifying as a University lecturer. They accepted the work Nietzsche had already published in lieu of a thesis and conferred a doctorate upon him without further examination. In the first instance, as was usual, the appointment was to the provisional or subordinate grade of *ausserordentlicher* professor, but in a short time (March 1870) it was duly confirmed and the post turned into a full ordinary professorship. The University was a small one, it is true, but the reputation and esteem attached to a chair is often very much what its occupant is able to give it ; and at one bound, at the early age of twenty-four and a half, Nietzsche had reached a position as high, in principle, as any to which he might aspire. On 28th May he delivered his inaugural address on *Homer and Classical Philology*, concluding with a brief statement of his high conception of his mission : " All philological activity should be surrounded and enclosed by a philosophical view of the world, in which everything individual and isolated evaporates as something objectionable and only what is whole and unified remains ".<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful whether all his hearers fully understood him, but he created a marked impression on them, and they were convinced that they

<sup>1</sup> " Very good " Portion of a phrase from the Septuagint translation of the first chapter of Genesis, which Schopenhauer was fond of quoting, rather scornfully.

<sup>2</sup> Works, vol. II, p. 24 f.

## NITZSCHE

had secured a notable man. Nietzsche seemed destined to a brilliant future.

But these bright colours give us only part of the picture, in the shadows and in the background there are other tints of more sombre hue to which we must now give attention.

In the first place, we must glance at Nietzsche's philosophic outlook. As we saw in a previous chapter, he began to read Lange's *History of Materialism* soon after it came out in 1866, and Lange's teaching, as Nietzsche summarised it, involved a radical criticism of Schopenhauer's fundamental dogmas. The thing-in-itself is unknowable — such is the Kantian doctrine as Lange sets it forth — and it has no meaning beyond experience, although within experience, as an ideal, it may serve to urge the understanding to fuller efforts in its endeavour to organise experience itself. Schopenhauer is in direct contradiction with Kant on this point, and anyone who accepts the pure Kantian view cannot logically also accept that of Schopenhauer. There is no evidence to show that at first Nietzsche realised the full force of the difficulty, and in the letter, already quoted above, of January 1867 to Gersdorff after the death of Gersdorff's brother, the consolation which Nietzsche tries to offer would have no value whatever if Schopenhauer's view were not taken as true. Nevertheless the tone, although it is pitched high, is not completely confident, and the last word has not been said. A little later — in 1867, according to his sister — Nietzsche wrote a brief criticism of Schopenhauer's philosophy. It is not original, and depends almost entirely on Lange, but it raises the fundamental problems connected with Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will, although somehow or other Nietzsche, for the moment, in practice avoided facing the issues it involved.

In 1868 Nietzsche gave renewed attention to Lange, and in October of that year he received a letter from Deussen which raised the whole problem acutely. Deussen, not yet a true convert, suggested that Nietzsche, with his skill in writing, might undertake a criticism of Schopenhauer's theory. To this Nietzsche replied as follows :

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

"I reject at once the proposal submitted to me there [*i.e.* at the end of Deussen's letter].

My dear friend, 'to write well' (if under other circumstances I deserve this praise *ingo de pinguo*) nevertheless does not really justify the writing of a Critique of Schopenhauer's system - moreover you can have no idea at all of the respect which I have for this 'first rank Genius', if you credit me with the capabilities of overturning the said giant, for, I take it, you understand by a Critique not merely the indication of some faulty patches, incomplete proofs, tactical infelicities. . . . One does not write a Critique of an outlook on the world, one just either accepts it or does not accept it, to me a third standpoint is unintelligible. Anyone who does not smell the scent of a rose, surely does not dare to criticise it on that account, and if he does smell it, *à la bonium*<sup>1</sup> he will lose the desire to criticise. We simply do not understand one another - allow me to be silent about these matters. this, I recollect, I have already suggested to you."<sup>2</sup>

In reading this abrupt and resolute pronouncement of the will to believe, one's mind goes back to the Nietzsche of Bonn, who tried to disabuse his sister's mind of her childish and ancestral faith, and one remembers the words. "It is here then that the ways of men divide - do you wish to strive after peace of mind and happiness, well then believe, do you wish to be a disciple of truth, then inquire".

But was it peace of mind and happiness that Nietzsche sought through his belief? Rohde and he had much in common at this stage, and Rohde too had been reading Lange. It is therefore not without significance that we find the following passage from Rohde to Nietzsche, written about a fortnight after Nietzsche's rebuff to Deussen

"In general I come to realise ever more fully how wise that Sophist was,' who in spite of all the counter-arguments of the 'healthy' people of his time, maintained that man is the measure of all things. Not less have I been strengthened in this by Lange's book. . . . Unquestionably he is right in taking in such grim

<sup>1</sup> About 20th Oct. 1868

<sup>2</sup> Protigoris



## NIETZSCHE

earnestness Kant's discovery of the subjectivity of the forms of perception, and if he is right, then is it not quite in order for each to choose for himself an outlook on the world which will satisfy him, *i.e.* his ethical need, which is his proper nature? Now, there speaks inwardly to me an intuition which strongly emphasises the deep, harsh seriousness of that wholly Unknown, and so to me the value of the teaching of Schopenhauer has not been reduced in any way whatever by the growing conviction of the subjective fancifulness of all speculation; a fact which on the contrary again confirms that the will, the *Wille*, is stronger and more primitive than the calmly deliberating intellect. Even on this point, dear friend, we agree most heartily together."<sup>1</sup>

The reference to "healthy" people at the beginning of this passage should be noted. In Nietzsche's letter to Deussen it occurs again. Through his accident, Nietzsche says, he has learned that to philosophise and to be ill are not altogether the same thing, "but yet there is, to be sure, a certain 'healthiness' which is the eternal enemy of deeper philosophy".

The same note occurs once more, and its meaning is made more explicit, in a criticism of some articles on music, written by Nietzsche's former teacher, Otto Jahn. "Wagner", says Nietzsche, "has a sphere of feeling quite hidden from O. Jahn: Jahn remains a hero of the popular rural press, a healthy fellow to whom the Tannhäuser saga, the Lohengrin atmosphere, are a closed world. What pleases me in Wagner, what pleases me in Schopenhauer [is], the ethical atmosphere, the Faustian odour, cross, death and tomb, etc."<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche thus, like Rohde, claims that his acceptance of Schopenhauer's philosophy rests on the appeal which its ethical qualities make, but, again like Rohde, he acknowledges that these ethical qualities are not such as to attract the ordinary man, the "healthy" man, the Philistine. To the mind of the latter these qualities appear unwholesome, and that which to Nietzsche and Rohde is fragrant with the odour of sanctity seems to the Philistine redolent of corruption and decay.

<sup>1</sup> 4th Nov. 1868.

<sup>2</sup> To Rohde, 8th Oct. 1868.

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

There is a one-sidedness in the argument of these two young disciples of Schopenhauer at this stage. The deep, harsh seriousness, of which intuition assures Rohde, belongs properly speaking to the phenomenal world and not to the thing-in-itself; the latter, however restless its manifestations may be, is in reality passionless and unmoved. Similarly, the scenes of agony, death and burial, to which Nietzsche willingly turns his eyes, constitute but the outward side of things, the phenomenal world, from which release has to be obtained. The real ethical value of Schopenhauer's teaching and the verification of it, if such there be, should lie in the value of the release which the moral life brings: but of this we hear little or nothing from Nietzsche at this time. He does not speak of the calm and rest which are said to lie behind the turmoil and pain. And we cannot but suspect that when he stands bravely forth thus at the end of his student days, as a true believer in the gospel of Schopenhauer, his strong assertions hide a fear, smothered deep down in his heart, that the higher reality of the untroubled will, in which salvation is to be found, may be only a vain imagining. Of the foulness of the present world he is theoretically convinced; of the serenity of the world beyond he is not so sure. But for the moment, doubt is held in check and faith is uppermost.

Secondly, we may glance at some disquieting features in our young philologist's attitude to his chosen profession. Both he and Rohde at this time showed little enthusiasm, and even some distaste, for the career that lay in front of them. Nietzsche, Rohde thought, would make good in it, but he was mistrustful of himself and did not know what to do. Nietzsche's reply was that they were going to be University teachers of Classics; there was no escape from it; they should therefore make the best of it. Here is how he puts it:

"Furthermore, dear friend, I sincerely beg you to direct your eyes fixedly to an academic career, on which some day you will have to enter; concerning it some time or other you will have to make a firm decision. Here there is no room for anxious

## NIETZSCHE

self-examination : we simply must, because we have before us no more suitable career, because we have closed the way for ourselves to other more useful positions, because we have no other means at all of making our constellation of powers and talents useful to our fellow men than the way just indicated. Finally, we may not live for ourselves. For our part let us take care that the young philologists conduct themselves with the necessary scepticism, free from pedantry and over-valuation of their subject, as true promoters of humanistic studies. *Soyons de notre siècle*, as the French say : a standpoint which no one forgets more easily than the future philologist."<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this statement it is not surprising to find some indecision in Nietzsche's mind, and an attempt to postpone the evil day. Thus, on the one hand, we find him toying with the idea of changing over from the philological side, and writing for his degree a thesis on a philosophical subject. He went so far as to choose a subject—The Conception of the Organic since Kant—and to do a little work on it. On the other hand, when Rohde suggested to him the idea of spending a year or two in Paris before taking up academic work, Nietzsche excitedly leaped at the notion, and the two young men refer to it again and again in their letters as the one shining light on their horizon. Paris, it may be gathered, meant more than philology to them, and they anticipated all the delights it had to offer.

Of the two it was perhaps Rohde who complained of the dullness of philology most easily and most bitterly, and who looked forward most eagerly to the emancipation which Paris was to offer them ; but although Nietzsche caught fire less readily he smouldered longer and more intensely. When his work on Diogenes Laertius received an academic award, he could not help rejoicing, but he suspected motives behind the award, and he resented them. "In such things", he writes to Rohde, "our father Ritschl is a pander, *his laudibus splendidissimis* he tries to hold us fast in the net of Dame Philology. I have a surprising desire in the essay which I have just written *in*

<sup>1</sup> About 4th May 1868.

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

*honorem Ritscheli* [on the writings of Democritus] to tell the philologists a number of bitter truths."<sup>1</sup>

At times Nietzsche tried to make the best of his prospects. In Paris, he suggests, he and Rohde must now and again publish an article so that they may become known and pass through the preliminary stages of academic promotion as quickly as possible. "In any case", he says, "we both approach this academic future without exaggerated hopes. Still I think it possible that in the position of a professor one may acquire and maintain, firstly, adequate leisure for one's own studies, secondly, a useful sphere of influence, finally, a situation fairly independent both politically and socially."<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche's underlying dissatisfaction with his prospective career as a teacher of philology led him to express a bitter criticism of those who did not share his feelings. He and Rohde looked down on those others who found pleasure in their work, and emphasised their superiority by calling the latter "owls" or "moles". Naturally too, their partially suppressed feeling, with its implicit self-criticism, showed itself by an occasional readiness to take offence. One outstanding example of this may be given. Rohde had written an essay on Lucian, which on Nietzsche's advice he sent to the *Rheinisches Museum*, the chief reason for the advice being that Ritschl was joint editor of the publication, along with Dr. Klette of Bonn. Unfortunately the Journal had a good deal of material in hand, and there was no room for the article in the next few issues. Moreover, while negotiations were going on, a dissertation appeared on the same subject by a graduate of Leipzig. Ritschl suggested, through Nietzsche, that Rohde might add a small appendix on this other man's work. Rohde, however, flared up and regarded the whole affair as an insult. In reply Nietzsche wrote to him, calmly enough, advising him to ask that his manuscript should be returned, and going so far as to speak of Ritschl's unfairness. He added, however, the perfectly valid defence of Ritschl and Klette that they were overstocked with material at the moment. In addition

<sup>1</sup> 1st-3rd Feb. 1868.

<sup>2</sup> About 4th May 1868.

## NIETZSCHE

he offered to find another publisher for Rohde, and be it added, he did so successfully with the help of Windisch. Rohde accepted the offer, but he was unappeased and again expressed his indignation. Nietzsche then became infected with the same spirit, and eloquently voiced his disgust at the whole tribe of philologists. These very people, it may be said, had in Leipzig been very appreciative of Nietzsche, and had shown him considerable kindness. All this went for nothing as Nietzsche's emotions flamed forth.

"Now that I see once again the swarming breed of the philologists of our day close at hand, so that I must observe daily all the molelike efforts, the full cheek-pouches and the blind eyes, the joy over the captured worm and the indifference to the true and indeed highest problems of life, and not only in the young brood, but in the full-grown adults; it appears to me ever clearer that we two, if we remain thoroughly true to our genius, will not go along the path of life without being struck at and thwarted in many ways."<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche is prophesying here. He is roundly condemning all his teachers and fellows as narrow-minded grammarians who will persecute anyone who leaves the narrow track. The persecution had not come yet: Nietzsche was merely expecting it and, one may add, inviting it. So he goes on: "When the philologist and the man do not completely coincide, the breed mentioned is astonished at first, then gets angry, and finally scratches, growls and bites; and of this you have just had an example. For it is quite clear to me", Nietzsche adds gratuitously, "that the trick played on you was not directed against your special piece of work but against you personally; and I live in the sure hope of soon getting a similar foretaste of what awaits me in this hellish atmosphere."

In spite of all this strong language Nietzsche remained on the best of terms with Ritschl and the rest of the "swarming breed". Rohde himself recovered perspective rapidly enough, found that Ritschl was well disposed to him, and forgot his grievance. The real conflict lay within the minds of the two young men themselves, and from it they were not yet delivered.

<sup>1</sup> 20th Nov. 1868.

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

Thirdly, in spite of his efforts to be more of a society man and the many contacts which he made with people who were willing to receive him into their circle, Nietzsche did not feel at all secure in his social life. The very intensity of his friendship with the absent Rohde is the sign of a lack in the social relations present to him. Rohde showed the same feature in quite as marked a degree, and both men yearned for the other as if they had no self-reliance and no other comfort. Thus the paeon to friendship and the lament over loneliness ran intermingled through their letters. One example of it will be enough. From his home and family circle in Naumburg Nietzsche writes early in January 1869, to say that Rohde's Christmas greetings had made his "joy full". Then he goes on: "He who has become accustomed to feel himself a recluse, he who with cold eye sees through all the social and companionable bonds and notes how tiny and thread-like the ties are which fasten man to man, ties so strong that a puff of wind tears them; he who has the insight to see that what makes him a recluse is not the flame of genius, that flame from whose circle of light all things fly because, lightened by it, they seem so macabre, so foolish, so thin and vain; nay, he who is solitary on account of a natural idiosyncrasy, on account of a rarely brewed mixture of wishes, talents and strivings of the will, he knows what 'an inconceivable miracle' a friend is; and if he is a worshipper of idols, he must erect an altar to 'the unknown God' who created the friend." This, if complicated, is eloquent: what follows is not less important. "I have here the opportunity of examining close at hand the ingredients of a happy family life; and it cannot compare with the height, with the special quality, of friendship. Feeling in a dressing-gown, the ordinary and trivial made to glitter by this comfortable feeling spreading over them -- that is family happiness, which is too abundant to be able to be worth much."

The disparagement of family life which Nietzsche's attitude involves here was not a momentary and local thing. In Leipzig, as we have seen, he was treated by the Biedermanns as one of themselves, but he stood aloof. At a later date his sister went

## NIETZSCHE

to stay with them and Nietzsche told her that she would be quite at home there, but said of himself: "I always stood a little distance off, so that I might have nothing to do with the moods and occasional ill-humours of the various members of the family".<sup>1</sup>

If we consider the three features of Nietzsche's life which we have just discussed, the doubt in the heart of his philosophic faith, the inner aversion to his chosen vocation, and the lonely contempt for a stable happiness in an organised social world, we may venture to surmise that they are not entirely separate things, but come from one and the same temperamental source. And as the story continues we may ask whether the new developments which unfold themselves spring from the same underlying unity, and are expressions or forms of it. This, however, is for the future, and for the present we may be content to note in what mood the young professor took up his new appointment. In his letters to Rohde he paints with dark colours. Realising Rohde's disappointment at the abandonment of the trip to Paris with the expansion of life which it promised, Nietzsche expresses his own regret also. Then he adds: "We are . . . indeed the fools of fate; not many weeks ago I wanted to write to you to propose that we should study chemistry and throw philology where it belongs into the lumber-room. Now the devil 'Fate' tempts me with a philological chair."<sup>2</sup>

Above all, Nietzsche gives the impression of the man who is alone in the crowd. From the busy life of Leipzig he writes to Rohde: "To-day on Schopenhauer's birthday, I have no one to whom I can open my heart so fully as to you. I live here in the ash-grey clouds of loneliness, all the more so as I have been received on many sides with open arms and almost every evening have yielded to the melancholy compulsion of invitations." Then looking towards Basle, which he had not yet seen, and the quality of whose society he had not yet tasted, he burst out: "And above all the loneliness, the loneliness, *ἄφίλος ἄλυρος*".<sup>3</sup>

This, however, is not quite his final word. To Gersdorff he does not let himself go with such abandon of self-pity, and

<sup>1</sup> 29th May 1869.

<sup>2</sup> 16th Jan. 1869.

<sup>3</sup> 22nd-28th Feb. 1869.

## THE SOLDIER AND SCHOLAR

on the night before his departure from his old home he writes that he is going "into the wide wide world, into a new, unaccustomed profession, into a difficult and oppressive atmosphere of duty and work".<sup>1</sup> He is horrified to think that he is in danger of becoming a Philistine, and he quotes the student song which calls by that name everyone who leaves student life. "To be a Philistine, *ἀνθρώπος ἄμουσος*, a man of the crowd—" he then cries, "may Zeus and the Muses preserve me from that." In one sense, he admits, he *must* become a Philistine, for he is now a professional man, and Schopenhauer has warned him that such are no longer of the elect. But he hopes by virtue of his philosophic enthusiasm and his interest in the deeper issues of life to escape the worst consequences of his fate. "To infuse my science with fresh blood," he says, "to convey to my hearers that Schopenhauer-like earnestness which is stamped on the brow of the high-minded man—this is my wish, my darling hope: I would fain be something more than the task-master of virtuous philologists: the production of teachers of the present, the care for the growing brood that is coming, all this is before my mind."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 13th April 1869.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



## VIII

### THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

NIETZSCHE held the chair of Classical Philology at Basle from 1869 to 1879, his tenure being interrupted for a few months in 1870 by his participation in the Franco-Prussian war, and later, chiefly after 1875, by ill-health, which in the end led to his resignation.

During those ten years his life was a tissue woven of many strands, and although they cannot be fully separated, we may gain a better insight into his development if we attempt, however incompletely, to disentangle them.

In the first place we may consider him as a teacher. As we have seen, he came to his post with grave misgivings. For philology at times he had expressed dislike and even contempt, and when Deussen in October 1868 spoke of it as "the Daughter of Philosophy", Nietzsche burst out: "Were I to speak mythologically, I should consider philology as an abortion begotten on the Goddess Philosophy by an idiot or a cretin."<sup>1</sup> In his private notes, written a month later, he spoke more temperately, but still with considerable severity. Too much attention had been given to small points, to facts for their own sake, and too little to the bearing on life. "In order to obtain an appreciation and impression of antiquity, we make too much fuss, learn too much and think too little. . . . Nothing should be investigated because it has once existed, but because it is better than what exists now and hence serves as a model."<sup>2</sup>

In his inaugural lecture Nietzsche recurs to the same theme. Philology, he realises and perhaps even complains, is a complex thing, borrowing from several branches of knowledge, and it is cultivated in different ways by different men. But for him it is of little value except in so far as it is allied with art and philosophy

<sup>1</sup> About 20th Oct. 1868.

<sup>2</sup> *Der werdende Nietzsche*, p. 428 f.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

and indeed passes over into art. Hellenism, for him, with its "unutterable simplicity and noble dignity" has something which the modern world lacks, and the value of classical study lies in the power which it has of presenting this ideal to us. "If we take up a scientific attitude to antiquity, if we were to try to apprehend what has happened with the eye of the historian or classify and compare the linguistic forms of ancient masterpieces, at all events reduce them to a few morphological laws, we always lose the wonderful formative power, the true fragrance of the atmosphere of antiquity, we forget the emotional yearning, which with the might of instinct, the most propitious chariotcer, took our tastes and enjoyments to the Greeks."<sup>1</sup>

But there seemed to Nietzsche, at this time, a right way of studying the classics, and at Basle he was free, within reasonable limits, to order his teaching as he pleased and to give philology the meaning which he thought best for it. Normally he had two classes to teach, and he supplemented them by a seminar. One of these classes consisted of boys from the local High School, which had a special arrangement with the University, the other of students specialising in Classics. The numbers were small: in the school about a dozen; in the University eight in 1869, rising to fourteen in 1871. At the request of the students, Nietzsche, with a private inward grimace of dislike, taught some Latin Grammar, but for the rest he concentrated his attention almost entirely on Greek literature. The works which he studied with his classes and on which he lectured were those in which he himself was interested, and so we find him dealing with the *Choephoroë* and the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles, the *Works and Days* of Hesiod, the Pre-Platonic Philosophers, and the Greek Lyric Poets. Nietzsche was in the habit of reading his lectures, and it is to be feared that at times he was considerably above the intellectual level of the average pupil. But for the good student he seems to have been a good teacher, stimulating and impressive, a little remote at times, but inspiring trust and confidence.

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. ii, pp. 3 ff.

## NIETZSCHE

He grumbled occasionally, complained that he was overworked and that his freedom was restricted, but many others have done this also ; and it is fair to say that on the whole Nietzsche liked teaching and did it reasonably well. After the experience of a month or two he tells his mother and sister : " I fancy that if I am not a born schoolmaster, nevertheless I am not a bad one ".<sup>1</sup> A little later he writes to Rohde : " I am satisfied with my academic position. The students have confidence in me, and I try to advise them in the best way, not only in *philologicis*. . . . For my lectures in the coming years I have made a plan : I shall read everything that I want to learn more exactly or which I must learn. Obviously I shall profit most by this. To my joy my lectures on the *Choephore* and the Lyric Poets proved very fruitful, and in any case better than I could have foreseen." <sup>2</sup>

After a year he was still pleased with his work, and expressed his satisfaction even with the school class. " I have now promoted the first class of the School to the University. The good lads show themselves very grateful and have really taken to me. Moreover I have said somewhat more to them than is usually heard in schools. In the end one gets more pleasure from a sympathetic class than in the cool height of the academic chair." <sup>3</sup>

Early in 1873 Nietzsche was afflicted by severe eye trouble, but he did not let it interfere with his school class. His University lectures presented more difficulty, for, as has been mentioned, he relied greatly on his manuscript. Fortunately Gersdorff was in a position to come to his help. When the lecture was being prepared beforehand, Gersdorff read all the necessary material to Nietzsche, and Nietzsche learned by heart all the passages he intended to quote. Thus fortified, Nietzsche spoke without notes, and to good effect.

In the winter of 1877 Nietzsche's health required him to give up his oral lessons and continue only with the lectures, but as soon as he could, he resumed full duty again ; and in the winter of 1878-9, before his health finally gave way, and while he was living in great solitude in a small house outside the town, he

<sup>1</sup> 29th May 1869.

<sup>2</sup> July 1869.

<sup>3</sup> 30th April 1870.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

came in daily to his classes and carried out his routine work. This aspect of Nietzsche's life may make but a slight impression in a general survey, and in his own final self-glorification, when he told an inattentive world why he was so wise, why he was so clever, why he wrote such good books, and why he was a man of destiny, it is lightly passed over and even touched with scorn ; nevertheless it should not be forgotten. And it is worthy of note that in 1877 when, wearily travelling from place to place in vain search of his lost health, he was urged by his sister to resign his Chair, he replied that it was only in Basle that he felt he was of any use and that his meditations and literary efforts had made him ill. " So long as I was a scholar ", he said, " I was in good health ; but then came the nerve shattering music and metaphysical philosophy, and worrying about a thousand things that do not concern me in the least. Hence I want to be a teacher again ; even if I cannot stand the work, I shall at least die at my post."<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche discovered, perhaps without knowing it, that the Greek and the Philistine might be of one blood.

Secondly, we may now consider another aspect of Nietzsche's life during this period, namely, his social relations with his colleagues and friends.

Basle, when Nietzsche first went to it, was a city with its foundations far in the past. The mediaeval walls with their gates and ramparts were just beginning to disappear, and the magnificent ancient houses told of the long-continued prosperity and tradition of the leading families. The city had played a notable part in the development of art and learning, and with true civic pride the citizens cherished their educational institutions. Ceremonious and exclusive to the outsider, they were friendly to the man of whom they approved ; and Nietzsche began his sojourn among them with every advantage. His academic position itself ensured him a welcome in many quarters, and the reputation for brilliance, which preceded him and which was enhanced by his public lectures, excited interest in him. He was young, but he showed a sobriety of demeanour beyond his

<sup>1</sup> Förster-Nietzsche, *Der einsame Nietzsche*, p. 34.

## NIETZSCHE

years ; even in his clothing he avoided all suggestion of youthful frivolity and he dressed with a punctilious regard to good form. His own family pride, and the good manners which came naturally to him, ensured him, in time, a worthy place in the social life both of the University and of the town.

His colleagues welcomed him heartily and did what they could to make him feel at home. "Of course, many invitations," he writes to his sister a month after his arrival : "for example, Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday of next week."<sup>1</sup> And the welcome was not confined to University circles. The names of his hosts and acquaintances mean little to us to-day, but one may be mentioned here. Councillor Wilhelm Vischer, Professor of Philology, Chairman of the Board of Education, was a man of much influence and many connections, and Nietzsche attended many entertainments at his house. Indeed he gave Nietzsche a standing invitation to a family gathering held every Tuesday evening, and Nietzsche made much use of his hospitality. Referring to these early years, Nietzsche's sister says that her "brother had every reason to feel happy at Basle. Everybody treated him in the most friendly fashion, and even the *haute volée*, who were known as a rule to stand so severely aloof from everything new and strange, made an exception in his favour. He was constantly invited to balls and similar receptions in the community, and was often the only German present at these functions. He danced so much during the winter of 1872, that in the following spring he wrote asking us to order new evening clothes for him at his tailor's in Naumburg. 'These I am now wearing are quite worn out with the exertions of this winter.'"<sup>2</sup>

This social gaiety, however, did not come naturally to him, and he sustained it only with effort. Underneath the surface, Nietzsche, the young professor, was just as shy and sensitive as Nietzsche, the student, the schoolboy and the child. He told his mother and sister that he accepted the many invitations showered upon him from a sense of duty, in order not to hurt

<sup>1</sup> 29th May 1869.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 334.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

other people's feelings. To Rohde he is more outspoken. In June 1869 he writes: "Among the crowd of my esteemed colleagues I feel so alien and uninterested, that I am already refusing with pleasure invitations and requests of all sorts which are daily pouring in on me". And a month later he amplifies this: "I make little contact with my colleagues among them I feel as I used to feel among students: on the whole without any need to concern myself more closely with them, but also without any envy: indeed, to be precise, I feel a little grain of contempt for them, with which there goes quite well a very polite and pleasant intercourse. . . . People are gradually getting accustomed to leaving me alone, not without a feeling of regret -- for they think that I shall not then feel happy and amused in Basle -- the good-hearted fellows"<sup>1</sup> And even as late as September 1871 he says "It is taking me a long time to overcome my involuntary aversion to my whole Swiss existence -- so far I have not even reached the freezing point of indifference".

Every now and then the old sense of loneliness, of insufficiency and of dissatisfaction with his ordinary companions overwhelms him, and the passion of his friendship for the absent Rohde bursts into flame. When he is settling into his lodgings at Basle and associating regularly with his new colleagues he writes to his mother: "I would be more content still if I had my friend Rohde here; for it is tiresome to have to procure again an intimate friend and adviser for domestic use".<sup>2</sup> To Rohde, of course, he writes more strongly. In February 1870 he says: "I miss you in a quite unbelievable way. . . . It is, I may say, a new experience for me to have no one on the spot to whom I can tell the best and the worst of life. . . . In such hermitlike conditions, such young and heavy years, there is really something pathological about my friendship: I pray you, as a sick man prays: 'Come to Basle'."<sup>3</sup>

This was not a mere rhetorical cry on Nietzsche's part. He had already tried to persuade Rohde to come to Basle, not merely

<sup>1</sup> July 1869

16th June 1869

<sup>2</sup> End of Jan. to 15th Feb. 1870

## NIETZSCHE

as a visitor but as a member of the staff, and he pointed out that there was room for a lecturer in philology. Nothing came of this, but in the beginning of 1871 Nietzsche wrote in great excitement that the Chair of Philosophy had fallen vacant at Basle and that he was applying for it, with the stipulation that Rohde was to succeed to his philological Chair. To Rohde this prospect was as agreeable as it was to Nietzsche, and the two young men waited anxiously for the decision of the University. Nietzsche unfortunately was in ill-health at the time and had to go to Italy to recuperate, and he feared that his lack of a strict philosophical training, together with his known enthusiasm for the doctrines of Schopenhauer, might prove a barrier to his appointment. And so it turned out. Nietzsche had to continue as a philologist and Rohde became a professor at Kiel.

At first Nietzsche lived alone in Basle, but after some time he shared lodgings with Franz Overbeck, a young professor of Church History who came to Basle early in 1870; and in the autumn of 1872 Romundt joined them. In this small circle Nietzsche found some of his needs for comradeship satisfied, although neither man ever was quite as much to him as Rohde or even Gersdorff had been. Nevertheless they were good followers of Schopenhauer, and submitted to Nietzsche's influence. Great, therefore, was Nietzsche's surprise and indignation when Romundt, for a time at least, revolted, and announced his intention of becoming a Catholic priest. Romundt had become a Privatdozent at Basle and had been lecturing chiefly on Schopenhauer when this change of mind came upon him in the winter of 1874-5. Nietzsche himself had by this time changed many of his former opinions and was not far from renouncing his own allegiance, but he resented the step which Romundt took. Here is his account to Rohde :

"But now something, which you do not know, and which you, as my truest and most sympathetic friend, have a right to know. We also — Overbeck and I — have a sorrow at home, a skeleton in the cupboard : do not fall off your chair when you hear that Romundt intends to join the Catholic Church and

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

wishes to become a Catholic priest in Germany. This has just been divulged, but, we hear, to add to our horror, that it has been in his mind for several years, although never before has it come so near to fruition. I am a bit hurt about it, and occasionally I feel it is the worst thing that could have been done to me. Of course Romundt did not mean it badly — so far he has not thought for a moment of anything else than himself, and the cursed emphasis which is given to the ‘salvation of one’s own soul’ makes him quite oblivious to everything else, friendship included. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Part of Nietzsche’s resentment arose from anti-Catholic bias — “never before have I felt more strongly my dependence upon the spirit of Luther” — but another part, and perhaps the greater part, was due to Romundt’s refusal, in spite of eight years’ close intercourse with Nietzsche, to have his opinions prescribed for him. Nietzsche continues — “It is precisely in point of friendship that I am wounded, and I hate the disingenuous sneaking nature of many friendships more than ever and shall have to be more on my guard”.

When Romundt left Basle, Nietzsche and Overbeck accompanied the apostate to the station. “It was exceedingly sad,” said Nietzsche, “and Romundt kept repeating that all that was best and most beautiful in his experience had now come to an end: with copious tears he begged for forgiveness, and did not know what to do, he was so wretched. An extraordinarily weird thing occurred at the last moment. A porter at the railway station closed the door of the carriage just before the train began to move, and Romundt, wishing to say something to us, tried to pull down the window. But in vain! He strained and strained, and while he was struggling thus in order to let us hear what he wanted to say, the train slowly rolled out of the station, and all we could do was to exchange signs. The ghastly symbolism of the whole scene depressed me exceedingly, as it did Overbeck (a fact he confessed to me later). I could scarcely endure it.”<sup>2</sup>

There was one of Nietzsche’s colleagues at Basle, however,

<sup>1</sup> 28th Feb. 1875.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 369.



## NIETZSCHE

who stood above the rest and for whom he had a great admiration, Jacob Burckhardt, the professor of the History of Art. Burckhardt was a much older man than Nietzsche, aristocratic in his outlook and manner, and rather difficult of approach. But he approved of Nietzsche, finding much in common with him in his view of life and antiquity. In May 1869 Nietzsche told Rohde: "I have got into closer touch from the beginning with the highly gifted old fellow Jacob Burckhardt: of which I am heartily glad, for we find a wonderful agreement in our aesthetic paradoxes". In 1870 Burckhardt gave a course of weekly lectures on the Study of History—"in the spirit of Schopenhauer", Nietzsche remarks—and Nietzsche attended them. The two went for walks together, and in 1871 Nietzsche spent some days with him. On occasion Burckhardt could unbend. In October 1870 Nietzsche spent an unusually cheerful holiday with Rohde and Gersdorff, and he suggested that the occasion merited some thank-offering to the kindly spirits which had looked after them. "Next Monday evening", he wrote, "at ten o'clock let each of us take up a glass of dark-red wine, pour half of it out into the black night, with the words *χαίρετε δαίμονες* and drink the other half."<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt joined Nietzsche in the ceremony, and the wine was duly poured from the window of Burckhardt's house.

But Burckhardt was a staid and rather reserved man, some twenty-six years older than Nietzsche, an object of respect rather than intimacy, and at this time Nietzsche found refuge from his social and intellectual distresses more fully elsewhere, namely, in his friendship with Wagner.

In 1869, when Nietzsche first went to Basle, Wagner, after a troubled career, was living in seclusion at Tribschen near Lucerne. After many years of disagreement and patched-up reconciliation, his wife, Minna, had finally left him in 1861, and in 1864 he had gone to Munich, where he stood high in the favour of the young king, Ludwig II. Here he fell in love with Cosima, the daughter of Franz Liszt and wife of Hans von Bülow, one of the most

<sup>1</sup> To Rohde, 21st Oct. 1871.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

famous pianists and conductors of the time. Cosima, already the mother of two children, Daniela and Blandine von Bülow, returned Wagner's passion, and in April 1865 she bore Wagner a daughter, Isolde. Wagner and von Bülow nevertheless remained on friendly terms, and when in 1866, a few months after the death of his wife, Minna, Wagner left Munich to avoid financial and political complications, he invited the whole von Bülow family with great urgency to come and share his new house at Tribschen with him. "Hans," he wrote, "will you fulfil my desire? Assuredly, for you know that I love you. . . ." Von Bülow did not see the matter in that light and did not come, but Cosima, abandoning him, answered the call, bringing her children with her. In 1867 she bore Wagner another daughter, Eva, at Tribschen.

Into this interesting and unconventional household Nietzsche shyly introduced himself soon after he reached Basle. He spent his first holidays in May 1869 at Lucerne, and making his way one Saturday morning to Tribschen, he hung about the garden gate, listening at a distance to Wagner in the throes of composition. Here he was observed, and an invitation was issued to him which led to a definite visit two days later. The visit was so successful that it was followed shortly afterwards by another invitation, in which Nietzsche was asked to come to dinner on Wagner's birthday, 22nd May, and spend the night. Nietzsche's professorial duties did not permit him to accept the invitation, but he was deeply gratified to receive it. His reply to Wagner is worthy of some record here :

"MOST HONOURED SIR,

It has long been my intention to express unreservedly the debt of gratitude I owe you. As a matter of fact the highest and most inspiring moments of my life are closely connected with your name, and I know of only one other man, and that man your twin brother of intellect, Arthur Schopenhauer, whom I regard with the same veneration. . . ."

Nietzsche then characteristically works himself into the picture.

## NIETZSCHE

"I take especial pleasure in making this confession to you on this auspicious day and even do so with a feeling of pride. For if it be the fate of genius to belong to the 'select few' for the time being at least — these 'few' have every reason to feel highly honoured by virtue of the fact that it has been vouchsafed to them to see the light and bask in its warmth, while the larger public stands shivering in the cold outside. . . .

I make bold to count myself among these 'select few', since realising how incapable the world at large is of comprehending your personality, or of feeling the deeply ethical current by which your life, your writings, and your music are permeated — in short, of sensing an atmosphere of that serious and more spiritual outlook on life of which we poor Germans have been robbed overnight, as it were, by every conceivable sort of political misery, philosophic nonsense and aggressive Judaism."

And so it continues in this strain, with its fulsome praise, concluding, after a greeting to Baroness von Bülow, with the subscription,

"Your most faithful and reverent disciple and admirer,  
DR. FR. NIETZSCHE,  
Prof. in Basle."<sup>1</sup>

This letter was not mere compliment, but expressed Nietzsche's feelings fairly accurately. He tells the story of his visit to Rohde, with the comment: "Wagner is really all that we hoped from him: a lavishly rich and great mind, an energetic character and an enchanting amiable man, with a very strong will, etc. I must make an end, or I shall be singing a paean."<sup>2</sup> Writing to Gersdorff after further acquaintance with Wagner, Nietzsche shows that the impression has not diminished. "Moreover, I have found a man who reveals to me, as no other does, the image of what Schopenhauer called the 'genius' and who is penetrated through and through by that wonderfully deep philosophy. This is no other than Richard Wagner, concerning whom you must not accept any judgment to be found in the press, in the writings of musical experts, etc. No one knows him and can

<sup>1</sup> 22nd May 1869.

<sup>2</sup> 29th May 1869.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

judge him, for the whole world stands on a different basis and is not at home in his atmosphere. In him there rules such an unconditioned ideality, such a noble seriousness of life, that near him I feel as if I were near the divine." <sup>1</sup>

Even when writing home, where the proprieties were more strictly insisted upon, Nietzsche tells of Wagner, although his language is more restrained. "But what is of the utmost importance is that in Lucerne I have the friend and neighbour I have most longed for : of course not near enough, but still just so far off that every free day can be used for a meeting together. This is Richard Wagner, who is as great and unique as a man as he is as an artist. With him and the highly gifted Frau von Bülow (Liszt's daughter) I have now spent several happy days, *e.g.* the Saturday evening and Sunday before last. Wagner's villa, situated on the Lake of Lucerne, at the foot of Pilatus, in an enchanting isolation of lake and mountain, is, as you may imagine, excellently appointed ; We live there together in the most stimulating intercourse, in the most amiable family circle and quite removed from ordinary social trivialities." <sup>2</sup>

What Nietzsche did not mention in his letter, and indeed what he did not know of until he returned from Tribschen to Basle, is that on the second night of his stay, a son was born to Wagner and Cosima. He was given the heroic name of Siegfried.

Nietzsche's intimacy with Tribschen gradually increased, and he was attracted both by Wagner and by Cosima. They were a curiously matched couple. Wagner was a small man with a very large head, quick, energetic, full of ideas and prejudices, and ready in the expression of them, liable to take offence and pour out the vials of his wrath freely, but capable of sudden restraint and self-control. Utterly self-centred and egoistic, he was ruthless, self-confident, imperious and tenacious in carrying out his purposes and satisfying his desires. On those who worked with him, even those whom he liked, he would make the greatest demands, crediting them with as much energy in his service as he himself had. Lavish and extravagant, he lived to the utmost

<sup>1</sup> 4th Aug. 1869.

<sup>2</sup> 16th June 1869.

## NIETZSCHE

of his credit, and did not mind who paid his debts. Naturally kind-hearted, he could be pleasant, charming and helpful to those of whom he approved, and who were willing to follow his guidance, to others he could be an unscrupulous enemy. He was always convinced that he was in the right, and his vivid and ready imagination so shaped events in his mind that in them he was the good-hearted though often misunderstood hero.

Of Cosima it is not so easy to give a picture. Physically taller than Wagner, with a rather large mouth and nose, she had much charm. Not less determined than Wagner, she was less aggressive, quieter, less given to tilting at windmills, more capable of reaching her ends by accommodation. Married early to von Bülow, she had no great affection for her husband, and when Wagner appeared above her horizon, she knew at once that she had found her vocation — to appreciate, support and manage this wayward genius. She carried out her task.

In the company of these two people the young hero-worshipping professor was given a breath of a fuller and more vigorous life than he had ever experienced before. Young though he was, he was treated as an equal; and although Wagner at times was overbearing, in other moods he was a good listener, interested in Nietzsche and in his views of life. Cosima too was a good companion, able to take part in the discussion of those high matters which, for Nietzsche, gave life value. Tribschen thus paid Nietzsche the subtle compliment of being attentive to him, of finding and emphasising the affinity between his mind and its own, of helping him to develop his ideas and of borrowing freely from him.

But Wagner and Cosima borrowed more than ideas. They assumed that Nietzsche was interested in them not merely as people of genius dwelling on the heights, but also as human beings with ordinary human activities and needs. And so they borrowed Nietzsche's energy and time. For example, Wagner had written a lengthy autobiography, which he had difficulty in seeing through the press, because, he said, he was not familiar with the ways of the Italian printer in Basle to whom he had

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

entrusted it. The autobiography was for private circulation, and only twelve copies were to be printed. Wagner asked Nietzsche to correct the proofs of this work, and Nietzsche, flattered by the confidence shown in the request, willingly undertook to do so. Again, before Christmas 1869, which Nietzsche spent at Tribschen, Cosima commissioned him to buy presents for the children, treating him not as a fossilised professor, lost in antiquity, but as a young man of twenty-five, who lived near the shops. Nietzsche took his duty very seriously, and when Basle could not provide articles to his aesthetic satisfaction he went so far as to order them from Paris. Tribschen, thus, offered Nietzsche something after which his soul yearned. It had the intellectual atmosphere which he desired, but in addition to this, irregular as the establishment was, it was *de facto* a home, and perhaps a more than usually harmonious home. In it two rooms were set aside for his use, he was free to come without special invitation and without notice, and he was welcomed not only by the two great people at the head of the household but also by the children and the family retainer. And so in the place where his most original and daring ideas could be displayed, he could also unbend and learn to play with children.

What intensified Nietzsche's satisfaction was that when he induced Rohde and Gersdorff to come into touch with Wagner, they also were accepted and made to feel at home. Tribschen was thus not merely another but separate source of friendship for him, it was an extension of the old, and helped to unify his life. Moreover, although Wagner and Cosima were not quite respectable, Nietzsche's sister was induced to pay them a visit, and she at once fell under the magic spell. And even here the slight cloud soon disappeared: in July 1870 von Bülow was granted a divorce from his wife, and in August, amid the thunders of war, Wagner and Cosima were legally married. Nietzsche, who was unable to be present at the wedding, congratulated them, and there can be no doubt that his congratulations were sincere. He maintained in theory that the great ones of the earth, people of genius in Schopenhauer's sense of the term, were not

## NIETZSCHE

bound by the rules made for ordinary humanity, and were free to rule their lives by their own standards. "Our artists", he said, "lead a freer, more unconventional and honest life and the most striking example we have, I mean Richard Wagner, proves to us that genius need not fear to take an inimically hostile attitude towards existing social forms and laws, if by doing so he is endeavouring to disclose the still higher truth and law dwelling in him."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, in practice, Nietzsche found the unconventionality a little disconcerting, and was glad when it disappeared.

Nietzsche spent the Christmas of 1869 also at Tribschen, prolonging the visit to between two and three weeks, and feeling, as he says, "amazingly refreshed".<sup>2</sup> In later life, just before his final breakdown, in *Ecce Homo* he made a reference to Tribschen, which sets forth, not altogether unfairly, what it meant to him. "I feel I must express a word or two of gratitude for that which has refreshed me by far the most heartily and most profoundly. This, without the slightest doubt, was my intimate friendship with Richard Wagner. All my other relationships with men I treat quite lightly; but I would not have the days I spent at Tribschen — those days of confidence, of cheerfulness, of sublime flashes, and of profound moments — blotted from my life at any price. I know not what Wagner may have been for others; but no cloud ever darkened *our* sky."<sup>3</sup>

This statement of course is an exaggeration. At times there were clouds: Wagner could be a taskmaster, driving his willing followers too hard; and at times Nietzsche felt the strain. Wagner was apt to demand attendance from his friends even at the expense of their convenience, and more than once Nietzsche was reproached, half in jest but also half in earnest, for his long absences. But the clouds at Tribschen were small, and easily dissipated, and what Nietzsche rightly remembered was the brilliant clear sky which dispersed his gloom.

<sup>1</sup> Förster-Nietzsche, *Wagner und Nietzsche*, p. 59 f.

<sup>2</sup> To Rohde, April 1870.

<sup>3</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 201.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

Towards the end of 1870 Wagner conceived the idea of having a new and special theatre built at Bayreuth, a town of some 18,000 inhabitants, the capital of Upper Franconia, in Bavaria ; and wild and extravagant as the scheme appeared, he carried it through to success. As it matured, he found he had to leave Tribschen, and in April 1872 his sojourn there came to an end. Nietzsche arrived one day when the removal was in progress. As Cosima passed from room to room, superintending the packing, Nietzsche sat down at the piano and began to improvise, pouring out in music his grief, his hopes, his fears and his memories of the vanishing past. The "Idyll of Tribschen" was over, and a new phase of life was about to begin.

We have considered two of the strands which run through Nietzsche's life as a professor at Basle ; we have now to glance at a more isolated feature, an interlude, which nevertheless produced a lasting effect : this is the part Nietzsche played in the Franco-Prussian war.

In the middle of July 1870 Nietzsche in quiet mood was writing a letter of trivialities to Rohde, telling him that he had sprained his ankle, and then pleasantly quoting a letter from Cosima at Tribschen which referred to Rohde in the friendliest terms. Then suddenly he broke off.

"Here is a frightful thunderbolt : the Franco-German war has been declared, and our whole threadbare culture is sliding down into the arms of the most horrible of the devils. What will happen to us ! Friend, dearest friend, we saw ourselves once again in the evening glow of peace. How I thank you. If existence now becomes unendurable to you, come back to me. What are all our aims !

We may already be at the beginning of the end. What a wilderness ! We shall again need cloisters. And we will become the first *fratres*."

He signed the letter : "The true Swiss".

Almost immediately after this he wrote to his mother, using the same metaphor : "We were living so cheerfully in the evening glow of peace. Now the most awful storm has broken



## NIETZSCHE

out." Then he adds in parenthesis : " Finally I am troubled too in my mind at being a Swiss. Our culture is affected ! There is no sacrifice that would be too great for it ! This cursed French tiger."<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche wished to volunteer for service, but as he had become a Swiss national on accepting the chair at Basle the authorities would not let him go as a combatant, and gave him permission to serve only as a voluntary ambulance attendant. His sister was staying with him at the time, and his first duty was to get her home. He took her from Basle, which was crowded with refugees, to the Maderaner Thal, where they rested for a week or two. There Nietzsche recovered from his sprained ankle, employing his leisure in writing an essay on *The Dionysian Outlook on the World*. Then, having made arrangements for his sister, he proceeded to Erlangen, to attend a short course on medicine and first aid. He had for companion a landscape artist from Hamburg, named Mosengel, and with him he studied, trained and did his duty in the field.

Nietzsche was never in the firing line, but he saw much of the effect of war at first hand. His letters, however, contain little of it. To Rohde he was very brief : " Of my war experiences I can not tell you anything — why did you not go through them with me ? "<sup>2</sup> To Gersdorff, who was himself on combatant service, he said a little more, telling the story concisely. His letter is dated 20th October 1870.

" In Erlangen I took a course of lectures at the local University on medicine and surgery. We had 200 wounded in the place. After a few days two Prussians and two Turcos were handed over to me for special treatment. Two of them developed ulcerated diphtheria, and I had much painting to do. After fourteen days, the two of us, Mosengel and I, were sent out by a charitable society. We had a lot of private messages, also considerable sums of money to be handed over to 80 field deacons who had been sent out before us. Our plan was to join up with my colleague Ziemssen at Pont-à-Mousson and attach ourselves

<sup>1</sup> 16th July 1870.

<sup>2</sup> 24th Nov. 1870.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

to his train of 15 young men. But this, I have to say, did not get done. It was very difficult to carry out our commissions : we had no addresses at all, and so we had to make a search personally by strenuous marches following very indefinite directions, in the Hospital at Weissenburg, on the battle-field of Wörth, in Hagenau, Lunéville and Nancy on to Metz. At Ars sur Moselle wounded were given over to our care. We were sent back with them, as they had to be taken to Carlsruhe. I had to look after six badly wounded men alone for three days and nights, Mosengel five ; it was bad weather, our goods wagon had to be almost shut, lest the poor invalids should be wet through. The atmosphere of the wagon was frightful ; in addition, my people had dysentery, two had diphtheria, in short, I had an incredible amount to do, bandaging for three hours in the morning and as long in the evening : in addition, no rest at night on account of the human needs of the sufferers. When I had delivered my patients at the hospital to which they were sent, I became severely ill : very dangerous dysentery and diphtheria in the throat attacked me at the same time. With difficulty I got to Erlangen. There I remained lying."

From Erlangen he wrote to his mother, saying that his one desire was to come home to Naumburg. "In my longing for rest and my great exhaustion I would not be anywhere else."<sup>1</sup> Mosengel undertook to get him home, and then after a short stay in Naumburg Nietzsche returned to Basle.

Thus he passed out of the war, but the effects of his experiences continued. His health suffered for some time, and, in spite of the violent remedies which, in the light of his newly acquired medical knowledge, he freely administered to himself, he broke down again, for a little, early next year. Nor were the mental effects less. For long the groans of the wounded and dying were in his ears, and the sight of their broken bodies was before his eyes ; but after a time these impressions faded, leaving an even more lasting one of an altogether different nature. Here is what his sister says : "On a certain evening at the close of a very

<sup>1</sup> 11th Sept. 1870.

## NIETZSCHE

heavy day with the wounded, and 'with his heart well-nigh broken with pity', he happened to enter a small town which lay on one of the chief military roads. As he turned the corner of a large stone wall and continued his way for a second or two, he suddenly heard a roaring noise as of thunder, and a magnificent cavalry regiment — gloriously expressive of the courage and exuberant strength of a people — flew by him like a luminous storm cloud. The thundering din waxed louder and louder, and behold ! his beloved regiment of horse artillery dashed forward at full speed,— oh, how he ached at not being able to jump on a horse, and at being obliged to remain inactive by the stone wall ! At last came the infantry, advancing at the double ! The men's eyes were aflame, and their feet struck the hard road like mighty hammer-strokes. And while this procession passed before him, on its way to war and perhaps to death, so wonderful in its vital strength and formidable courage, and so perfectly symbolic of a race that *will* conquer or perish in the attempt — 'then', said he, 'I felt for the first time, dear sister, that the strongest and highest Will to Life does not find expression in a miserable struggle for existence, but in a Will to War, a Will to Power, a Will to Overpower ! But', he continued after a while, 'I also felt what a good thing it is that Woden lays a hard heart in the breasts of commanding generals, otherwise how could they bear the awful responsibility of sending thousands to death in order to raise their people and themselves to dominion.'"<sup>1</sup> The words, perhaps, are largely those of the sister, and so too are the trappings: but there is no doubt of the substantial correctness of what is related ; and as we go on it may be well for us to keep in mind these longings and reflections of the weary comforter of the sick beside the stone wall.

At the same time, we must not confuse Nietzsche's sudden realisation of the lust for power with ordinary chauvinism. We have seen that, like more commonplace individuals, he was liable to attacks of patriotism, and when he returned to Basle he was still a good German. At the end of October 1870 he wrote home

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 267.

## THE YOUNG PROFESSOR

saying that he had had lunches at a place called "The Three Kings", where they charged him too much and did not give him enough to eat; but what troubled him most was the prevailing French sentiment there and the predominant use of the French language. In November, however, he was less enthusiastic. "For the present German war of conquest", he wrote, "my sympathies are gradually diminishing. The future of our German culture seems to be more than ever in danger."<sup>1</sup> And he had already said to Geisdoiff in confidence. "I hold the present-day Prussia to be a very dangerous force for our culture".<sup>2</sup> The events in Paris shocked him, and he and Büchhardt wept together over the burning of the Louvre. Perhaps we may take as his final word at this time what he said in writing home on the last day of the year: "The after effects of the war are more to be feared than the war itself, with its immense losses".

Finally, we have still to consider, in the fourth place, one more of the interwoven strands of Nietzsche's life, namely, his writings and his public lectures. These we can deal with briefly for the present, concerning ourselves for the moment only with their external history.

Nietzsche's first public appearance was made in May 1869, when he delivered his inaugural lecture on *Homer's Personality* to a crowded hall, greatly impressing the cultured audience of Basle. Next year in February he spoke on *The Ancient Music Drama*, presenting a new view to his audience, and exciting their interest and even enthusiasm. He followed up this success by another lecture on *Socrates and Tragedy*, in which he departed even further from the routine of established opinion. In the summer of the same year, as we have seen, he wrote another fairly long paper on *The Dionysian Outlook on the World* in which his maturing views were carried a stage further. In April he had expressed to Rohde his satisfaction with the lectures he had given, adding: "I have now the best hopes for my Philology only I must allow myself several years' time. I am approaching a unified perception of Greek antiquity, step by step and with a

<sup>1</sup> 12th Dec 1870.

<sup>2</sup> 7th Nov 1870

## NIETZSCHE

timid amazement." Soon he began to gather his material together with the idea of surveying the whole of Greek life and thought in a connected way from the new point of view to which he was coming. But he did not fully carry out his plan as he had originally designed it. He proposed to write a book on *Greek Cheerfulness*, which would be the first volume of a more extended study. But the practical needs of the world caught hold of him, and he was led to jettison some of the material, and to add other parts to the remainder, in order to assist Wagner in his effort to restore culture to the world. The book which Nietzsche published was thus in a sense premature and incomplete, but nevertheless it had a unity of its own as an expression of Nietzsche's own personality. The first publisher to whom he offered it was dilatory, and Nietzsche took it from him. Then, on the advice of Rohde and Gersdorff, he offered it to Fritzsche, the publisher of Wagner's writings. Fritzsche accepted it, and after some delay it appeared under the title of *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, the first copy coming into Nietzsche's hand on the last day of 1871, and the full edition being ready for the public at the beginning of 1872.

Almost immediately after the publication of this book, Nietzsche was asked whether he would consider a call to the University of Greifswald in northern Germany, but after a very brief hesitation he refused the implied offer. His decision so commended itself to the good people of Basle that the University authorities raised his salary from 3000 frs. to 4000 frs., and the students showed their good will by offering him the honour of a torchlight procession.

Nietzsche was now on the crest of the wave. Honoured, successful, full of missionary zeal, he seemed to have everything in his favour. With a gospel to proclaim, a world to convert, he had opened his campaign with a notable book; and he prepared to supplement the written word by more personal exhortation, in a course of public lectures, entitled *The Future of our Educational Institutions*. But before we follow his fortunes further, we must consider more closely the gospel he sought to proclaim.

## IX

### THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

*The Birth of Tragedy* is a comprehensive book covering a variety of subjects. Its ostensible purpose is a discussion of the way in which Greek tragedy developed from the ritual choral dance devoted to the worship of Dionysus, embodying in itself two distinct attitudes to life and two corresponding forms of art. But the book is much more than this. It is part of an attempt to reevaluate Greek antiquity, it is a piece of propaganda on behalf of Wagner, it is an attack on what Nietzsche calls the Socratic spirit in various manifestations, extending from Socrates himself down to modern opera and science. But it goes even beyond this; it presents an interpretation of the Universe and advocates an unusual attitude to life. It is therefore not an easy book to summarise, nor can it be tidily presented and disposed of within the limits of a chapter. Moreover, the difficulty is increased by its transitional character. Nietzsche was developing and changing his opinions when he wrote it, he was outgrowing some of his views even as he set them down, and occasionally, though not for long, a form of piety and loyalty to Schopenhauer and Wagner prevented him from expressing himself with perfect freedom.

Three topics in particular overflow the covers of the book to such an extent that Nietzsche's view cannot be fully understood without taking other material into account. These topics are: (1) the general conception of Greek antiquity, (2) the attitude to Wagner, (3) the social and political philosophy involved. Some at least of the reason for this incompleteness is that the book we have is not the book which Nietzsche intended at first to write. Partly under the influence of Schopenhauer, as he says, he had gradually been formulating a conception of

## NIETZSCHE

Greek life and thought, bringing to greater clearness and into relation with one another ideas which had long been occupying his mind. As far back as the spring of 1863 he had read two papers to the *Germania* synod on *The Demoniacal Element in Music*, and his main study at Pforta had been his study in 1864 of Theognis of Megara. His course was thus set early, and in previous chapters we have traced some features of his development. When he came to Basle, some of his views were already largely formed, and he proclaimed them in a preliminary way in the three public lectures which he gave soon after his appointment. In the summer of 1870 he carried them further in the essay he wrote on *The Dionysian Outlook on the World*, written in the Maderaner Thal after the outbreak of war, and he thought them over, tried them out again, re-stated them, gave them fresh life, during his short war service, within sight of the battle-field of Wörth and within hearing of the guns of Metz. At Christmas 1870 he took his ideas to Trübschen for Wagner's edification and approval. There he found Wagner interested, able and willing to talk on the subject, but at the same time preoccupied with problems of his own, with the obtuseness of the public, with the failure of almost all, high and low, to understand him, and with the impossibility of getting his works properly performed. Nietzsche then decided to support Wagner as far as he could, and so the book, which was to have been a treatise on Antiquity, with the title of *Greek Chaucfulness*, was changed, parts being discarded, parts being rewritten, and a new conclusion being provided, pointing to Wagner as the saviour and restorer of culture.

Thus the conception of Greek antiquity set forth in *The Birth of Tragedy* is incomplete and requires to be supplemented. Materials for this exist. Some of the portions set aside at the beginning of 1871 have since been published, and in addition there are portions of another book, begun in 1872, and intended to carry the interpretation of Greek culture further, but also set aside in the interests of Wagnerian propaganda.

Then again, the treatment of Wagner in *The Birth of Tragedy*

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

is also unsatisfactory, proceeding more by implication than by direct statement. This, of course, is not unnatural, as the whole of the last portion of the book leading up to Wagner was an after-thought. To understand Nietzsche's attitude here we must take into account also his pamphlet, *Wagner in Bayreuth*, his private notes on Wagner written from January 1874 onwards, and his two violent attacks on Wagner made after the breach of their friendship, and indeed after Wagner's death.

Finally, the view of social and political life — of civilisation, of history in general and present-day culture in particular — which occupies a considerable part of the book, is merely a preliminary sketch, followed by other writings, by the lectures on *The Future of our Educational Institutions*, by the writings on Strauss, on History and on Schopenhauer.

Moreover, Nietzsche's treatment of each of these topics — antiquity, Wagner, social and political life — depends on a philosophy which in turn is inextricably interwoven with his personal attitude to the world and to life. This philosophy is revealed most clearly by him at this stage in the conception of tragedy which he sets forth, and with this subject we must now begin. The other topics, when they are discussed later, will become more intelligible if they are seen in the light of the philosophical and psychological attitudes they imply.

The origin of Greek tragedy has been a subject of much discussion, and in some respects controversy has not yet ceased. This, however, is not the place to discuss the various theories put forward, and we must confine ourselves within narrow limits.

Dionysus was a god of Thraco-Phrygian stock, worshipped in Thrace and Asia Minor with orgiastic rites. His worship came to Greece in the main after what is called the heroic age, travelling probably by several routes, and as it spread it either developed or gathered into itself several kinds of performance, the relationships of which to one another are not altogether clear. Three of these may be distinguished. The first is found in the Dithyramb, a term of uncertain origin, but denoting at first some kind of



## NIETZSCHE

choral dance, probably by ivy-crowned Bacchic revellers, to the accompaniment of what the Greeks felt to be passionate and orgiastic music, played on the flute in the Phrygian mode. Towards the end of the seventh century B.C. the wandering band of singing and dancing revellers was collected by Arion into a circle, probably round an altar, and given more elaborate set poems to sing on definite subjects. Exactly what rude verses were used before this time is not altogether clear, but it appears certain that the literary character of the Dithyramb was given to it by Arion.

The second type of performance connected with Dionysus was the dance of satyrs, men dressed half as beasts — horses or goats — led by Silenus, dancing licentiously with rude and vigorous movements.

The third form was tragedy. Aristotle connects these three, and mainly on his authority it has generally been believed that the Dithyramb was danced and sung by satyrs, and that out of this grotesque performance tragedy developed. It is difficult, however, to reconcile this view with the extant evidence, and it is possible, even probable, that the three forms, although all ultimately connected with Dionysus, were distinct. In the villages of Attica a purely choral dramatic or semi-dramatic ceremony seems to have been celebrated, of a simple nature and far from refined in language, yet dealing with solemn themes. Its early content is difficult if not impossible to determine, but hero-worship and the celebration of rites of passion or fertility may have entered into it. Dionysus, when he came to Greece from Thrace, may have taken over some of these celebrations, and his passion and triumph may have been commemorated dramatically by the choir. But this is speculation. All we really know is that some kind of primitive performance existed, and that in the second half of the sixth century, Thespis — in a sense the founder of tragedy — created the part of an actor as distinct from that of a mere leader of the choir, made him impersonate some legendary or historical character, and gave him set speeches to deliver. After some time Thespis brought this primitive

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

drama to Athens, where in the Dionysian festival it became blended with the lyric chorus developed in Dorian art by Arion, giving rise to the earliest form of tragedy of which we have record. To this simple performance, Aeschylus in historic times added a second actor, Sophocles a third. Tragedy was then complete.

This brief sketch is all that can be given here, but it is perhaps enough to show how Greek tragedy, with its dual aspect, action and chorus, arose from the union of two elements neither of which generated the other, rustic Attic drama and Dorian choral lyric; and its double nature and origin were well indicated by the presence of two altars, one for burnt sacrifices and the other for offerings of fruits and grain.

In his account of the origin of tragedy Nietzsche pays little attention to historical evidence. He refers in a general way to tradition, and, it must be said, selects from tradition and legend the material most suited to his immediate purpose. His analysis rests primarily on a psychological rather than on an historical basis. He takes the view that tragedy developed from the Dionysian choral dance, and he assumes that this dance, celebrating the passion of Dionysus, was performed by satyrs, in a state of high emotional excitement.

But his argument begins further back. Schopenhauer had drawn a distinction between two forms of art: art in the ordinary sense, such as sculpture, painting, or many forms of poetry — plastic art we may call it — and music. Both, as we have already seen, lift us above the distresses of ordinary life, but they do so in different ways. Nietzsche laid hold of this distinction, and regarded these two forms of art as springing from two distinct modes of life, both of which take us away from the attitude of ordinary existence. The plastic arts arise from an activity of the imagination, seen most clearly in dreams — and here Nietzsche was anticipated by Schopenhauer, who declared that the dreamer was a perfect artist. This attitude to life, Nietzsche says, escapes from the crude world by creating a world of beautiful forms in which the mind can find refuge, and Nietzsche calls it Apollonian.

## NIETZSCHE

Plastic art represents to the eye, either by a material object or by an image, some beautiful appearance, which the spectator is invited to enjoy in aesthetic contemplation, as the dreamer does his dreams. Although its starting-point and basis is the ordinary visible world, it does not take that world as it stands but selects from it and remodels it. Ordinary things are transitory and changing, interacting with one another and difficult to separate from one another ; Apollonian art transforms and transfigures them, frees them from their interdependence and continuity, gives them greater definition and individuality, raising the beautiful objects thus created above the flow of time and making them eternal for the mind.

The second mode of life Nietzsche calls the Dionysian, and he finds it exemplified in the ecstatic rapture of the semi-intoxicated reveller. Such a one, Nietzsche says, no longer has a consciousness of a world over against him, he loses the sense of his separateness and individuality, and feels himself one with all men and all nature. When it appears in art this attitude is sharply contrasted with that of Apollonian contemplation : indeed, there is no real place in it for a spectator at all, for, in accordance with its Dionysian origin, it is fundamentally a mode of expression in which the artist surrenders himself so completely to the impulse working in him that he loses all sense of himself. Unlike Apollonian art, Dionysian art is not a principle of beauty, and it does not produce charming and pleasing shapes. It exists not for a spectator but only for the performer ; and at the heart of it there are pain and longing, a wild irrepressible need to express one's self. Relief can be obtained from this inward tension only by an equally wild and unrestrained activity of the whole being — voice and limbs together.

These two tendencies, Apollonian and Dionysian, Nietzsche tells us, were embodied in separate forms of art in the older period of Hellenic culture, acting and reacting on one another, till in the end they coalesced, giving rise to a new form in which the Dionysian rapture was no longer expressed in a momentary frenzy, but took definite shape, Apollonian in character, so that

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

the freedom and abandon of the revel did not vanish but were preserved. In its highest form this was Greek tragedy.

Tragedy arose thus from the Dionysian chorus, and Nietzsche's conception of the process involved is, very briefly, as follows. In the worship of the god, the members of the worshipping body, the chorus, gave themselves up to the dance and song so fully that each lost the feeling of separateness from the others and from nature. In their complex mood of suffering and exultation they saw before them in imagination the figure of the god himself, and identifying themselves with him they suffered and exulted with him, and he with them. At first this was merely an activity of the imagination, but soon — Nietzsche does not say exactly when, but presumably at the time of Thespis — the figure of the god took more material form and was represented on the stage. The action thus became dramatic, and actors were distinguished from the worshippers in the chorus. Then passing from the precise story of Dionysus, the actors began to present other plays in which the same fundamental moods and attitudes could be felt. The stories thus set forth came from legend and tradition, but they all had their essential character in common : all the other heroes and sufferers were but masks for Dionysus, and he was really the subject of them all. If we restrict the term myth to legend touched with this spirit, as Nietzsche does in effect, then the process as he sees it is in brief this. Music — the ecstatic choral dance — gives rise to the tragic myth, and the myth, represented on the stage, becomes the tragic play. In tragedy therefore an attitude, fundamentally Dionysian, is given concrete embodiment and takes an Apollonian form. But, Nietzsche insists, although the language is Apollonian, it is Dionysus who speaks. What is in the foreground, the action, is Apollonian : but the background from which it comes forth, the chorus, is Dionysian.

The period in which tragedy developed and flourished was the great age of Greek culture — the tragic age, Nietzsche calls it ; but the bloom did not long continue. Rather suddenly, when tragedy had just reached its highest form, another spirit came

## NIETZSCHE

to life, questioning, critical, rationalistic, incapable of surrendering itself to the Dionysian mood, smug, self-complacent, self-confident, untouched by any sense of the mystery and terror of existence. Unable to find any other meaning for truth than literal fact, this spirit rejected myth as historically inaccurate, and thereby destroyed tragedy. It applied moral standards to tragedy, and thus failed to apprehend its true aesthetic significance. Insensitive to real grandeur, incapable of feeling any of the rapture by which finer minds may be caught even in the undeserved and unrequited sufferings and death of the tragic hero, this inartistic spirit demands some kind of "poetic justice", according to which villainy receives its just reward and the world is shown to be governed on sound principles. Euripides is named by Nietzsche as the first perverter of the drama in this sense, but behind him there is a greater figure, a more dangerous enemy to culture, Socrates. The Socratic spirit, Nietzsche maintains, destroyed Greek tragedy, the highest form of culture the world has yet known, and to Nietzsche, at this time, it is culturally the enemy of all enemies.

In art this spirit has given rise to the opera, where the essentially inartistic spectator demands that the words shall be intelligible and the music accommodated to them, thus reversing the true relationship shown in Greek tragedy, where music, the dominating, vital element, used the drama as a means to its own expression, or perhaps as an illustration of the mood which it itself expressed. But the most formidable embodiment of the Socratic spirit in modern times is in positive science, and there it has long held the field. But, Nietzsche suggests, this shallow optimistic attitude to life is now giving way. Kant and Schopenhauer have shown the limits of science, they have proved that it cannot reach finality, and that in its efforts to complete itself it inevitably ends in self-contradiction and failure. If this result becomes more generally recognised by a society — and Nietzsche hoped that such a realisation was imminent — then a new valuation of life may be made; art may be called in to retrieve the failure of knowledge, and life may again be looked at from

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

the point of view of the artist. Tragic myth may then develop anew, and tragic drama may be reborn from the spirit of music ; and, freed both from the self-complacency of science and the superstition of Christianity, culture may rise again to its highest level and assume a tragic form.

Such are the main lines of Nietzsche's exposition : strange, even enigmatic at first sight. To understand them we must consider the meaning and spirit of the doctrines they contain. We may therefore ask : Is there any central point from which the rest can be seen to come forth ? The answer, in part at least, is not difficult. A fundamental pre-supposition of the whole argument, an assumption without which the whole structure would collapse, is the vanity, the pain, of ordinary life. This, of course, is Schopenhauer's teaching, and we have seen how eagerly Nietzsche took it over from Schopenhauer during his student days ; but it is also a doctrine which he must have heard echoing in the churches and cathedrals with which his boyhood was so closely connected. According to Lutheran Evangelicalism, human nature became corrupt through the Fall of Man. Nietzsche no longer believed in the Fall of Man, but he still retained a view which clung rather closely to the doctrine of human corruption. Schopenhauer, again, as we have seen, based his version of the teaching partly on a psychological theory of desire, to which, it may be noted, Nietzsche hardly, if ever, refers, but partly also on his metaphysical doctrine, of which Nietzsche had been an enthusiastic adherent. By this time, however, doubts had arisen in Nietzsche's mind about the possibility of proving this metaphysical conception of the world, and he, together with his friend Rohde, had been prepared to turn the situation round, and to justify the metaphysics by the moral seriousness with which it was connected. Thus it is fair to say that when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche did not think of trying to prove by abstract argument that the world was futile and miserable : he knew it to be so, he had experienced it, and was convinced of it at first hand. Thus the question which Nietzsche's philosophy has to answer is the old cry that has

## NIETZSCHE

come sounding down the ages : What must I do to be saved ?

In dealing with this question Nietzsche had two main answers to consider ; that of the Church and that of Schopenhauer. He had already ceased to believe in the doctrines of Christianity ; he no longer found any satisfaction in its solutions, and the only reference to it in *The Birth of Tragedy* is the abrupt, hostile interjection at the end of section 24, where the Church is accused of having kept the German genius in degrading bondage to the malignant dwarfs who are its priests and ministers. The violence and bitterness, even the venom, of the language suggests an uneasiness in Nietzsche's mind, but we may pass the matter over for the moment.

The other answer is that of Schopenhauer. We have already considered briefly the scheme of redemption which this philosopher offered, and we have now to mark Nietzsche's divergence from it. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, it is true, Nietzsche treated Schopenhauer verbally with the greatest respect as the master of modern thought, and for some years afterwards he continued to commend him as the greatest ethical teacher of the age, indeed of all time. Nevertheless when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche was no longer a true disciple of Schopenhauer. He could still speak Schopenhauer's language, but he had given up Schopenhauer's solution — how completely he may not himself have yet fully realised. The field of thought with which we are concerned is one where philosophy and religion meet, and we might say with fair truth that Nietzsche still accepted part of Schopenhauer's philosophy, but utterly rejected his religion and endeavoured to set up a new one in place of it.

In explanation of this statement we may recall Schopenhauer's mode of escape from human misery. The root of the difficulty is the unintelligent behaviour of the thing-in-itself, which being perfectly self-contained and in need of nothing, nevertheless without any assignable reason persists first of all in objectifying itself in " Ideas ", and then in individualizing these Ideas in a world of space and time, to the intense dissatisfaction and misery of the individuals in which it thus takes shape. From this dire

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

condition the first form of escape which Schopenhauer offers us is in art, where by grasping in a concrete object the Idea behind the phenomenal show, we finite subjects may rise for a moment above the limitations of space and time and be at rest. The second form is that of the ethical life, where our fellow-feeling with our neighbour again frees us from our narrow individuality. But the final form goes beyond this, and is found in the ascetic renunciation of the world and all its values ; a state of mind in which we have no wants to satisfy ; so that neither disappointment nor satiety can afflict us, and where, offering as it were no hold to time and change, we may remain unmoved and passionless in unshakable peace.

These solutions, however they differ, have this in common ; they are all forms of renunciation, they abandon or deny the claims of the active will in ordinary life, rise above finite individuality, and in some measure bring the seeker back to the unity and reality of the undisturbed thing-in-itself.

On the basis of these conceptions Schopenhauer is enabled to put forward a definite theory of tragedy. On the one hand tragedy, like all other forms of plastic art, places an object before us in which we can see the Idea, or adequate objectification of the thing-in-itself, free from the limitations of space and time. And it may be added, the particular Idea with which it is concerned, and which it presents, is the highest and most adequate, viz. that of human life. But it does more than this : it not only turns us towards reality, it also turns us forcibly away from the deceptive world of change and decay. Tragedy, Schopenhauer says, depicts " the terrible side of life. The unspeakable pain, the wail of humanity, the triumph of evil, the scornful mastery of chance, and the irrational fall of the just and innocent " are set forth as an indication of " the nature of the world and its existence ".<sup>1</sup> Tragedy brings home to the mind the futility and evil of life, and by crushing the hero it leads him to turn away from this evil, to abandon the will to live, and to sink back into the timeless reality behind. It is true, Schopenhauer admits,

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. i, § 51.



## NIETZSCHE

that some tragedies, particularly ancient tragedies, do not go so far as this : the hero sometimes refuses to be cowed or to submit, whatever ill may befall him ; he does not abandon the will to life, and dies unrepentant. But this, Schopenhauer thinks, is a weakness in those tragedies themselves. In the higher forms, and here Schopenhauer finds modern tragedy superior to ancient, this resignation is reached by the hero. But in all cases, ancient and modern, the spectator is allowed to see the evil of life and is encouraged to deny it. Tragedy thus, for Schopenhauer, is one way, the supreme one at the command of art, of bringing home to man the futility of his existence. If he has not already realised it through his own sufferings, he may be led to do so by participating in the sufferings of the tragic hero.

Such is Schopenhauer's plan of salvation, and Nietzsche treats it with scant respect. In the first place, he rejects without argument the ascetic ideal of life. The Greek, he tells us, was unusually sensitive to suffering, and when the feeling of destruction and cruelty came home to him, he was "in danger of longing for a Buddhist negation of the will. He is saved by art," says Nietzsche, "and by art he is saved for itself by — life."<sup>1</sup> Thus briefly, almost ignominiously, and yet finally, is the ideal of renunciation dismissed.

Secondly, Nietzsche alters Schopenhauer's conception of plastic art. Art, Schopenhauer says, turns the spectator towards the thing-in-itself : what it apprehends is indeed an individual thing, but when aesthetically apprehended, this thing is stripped of its individuality and invested with the timelessness of the Idea. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, plastic art carries the process of individuation a stage further, and thus moves away from reality. True, it makes something eternal, but what is thus transfigured is a more fully defined and separated object. For Nietzsche, as for Schopenhauer, the ordinary visible tangible world is a delusive appearance of the thing-in-itself : for Schopenhauer art is a return from this appearance, for Nietzsche, on the other hand, it is movement into further appearance creating fresh

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iii, p. 55.

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

delusion. For Schopenhauer it is a return to reality, for Nietzsche an escape from it.

Thirdly, Nietzsche radically alters Schopenhauer's conception of the ultimate reality, the thing-in-itself, and this change is the root and logical justification of the others. For Schopenhauer the thing-in-itself is free from the storms of life, and is in a state of complete satisfaction and calm. If we ask why then it comes forth into the world of appearance and individualises itself in nature and man, Schopenhauer puts the question aside, pointing out that it has no meaning, as it invites us to give a cause for that which is beyond all cause. To Nietzsche this is unsatisfactory. Therefore, to account for the transition of the thing-in-itself into a phenomenal world, he carries back the tension and pain of life into the heart of things. Pain, for Schopenhauer, exists only in the phenomenal world, and by going back to reality we can escape it. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, the pain is the very essence of reality. Shut up within its own confines the thing-in-itself is in unendurable tension, and only by going out of itself and uttering itself in a world of appearance can it overcome or neutralise this inner pain. "I feel myself impelled", says Nietzsche, "to the metaphysical assumption that the truly existent and primal unity, ever suffering and in contradiction with itself, needs at the same time the rapturous vision and the joyful appearance for its redemption."<sup>1</sup> For Schopenhauer the ideal is rest and serenity; for Nietzsche ceaseless activity in which pain is overcome and turned into rapture by unending action.

It follows from these considerations that, in Nietzsche's view, there are two methods of salvation, which at first sight are completely opposed. Apollonian art lifts us above the suffering of life by the creation of a world of appearance in which beauty reigns and into which evil is refused entrance. Dionysian art, on the other hand, goes back from appearance to the primal unity and reality. But this description is superficial, and the two attitudes have an important character in common. Apollo sets

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

## NIETZSCHE

forth from the human point of view and expresses himself in a world of appearance which he creates. Dionysus sets forth from the heart of things and also expresses himself in a world of appearance — the ordinary world in which we live. Salvation thus lies, in each case, in an outward creative process ; but the two cases differ in their starting-points and, to some extent, in the character of the creative processes involved. In the end the superiority of Dionysus to Apollo must be obvious. What Apollo can create is but the derivative world of dreams, of images, of artificially conjured-up beautiful forms ; what Dionysus can create is the infinitely varied, the infinitely varying, terrible world of existence itself. The redemption which Dionysus offers must therefore be something vastly greater and surer than that of Apollo — if man can attain to it.

Apollo, one might say, is an artist posing as a god ; Dionysus is a god posing as an artist : for the Dionysian spirit is a form of mystical religion. In the Dionysian ecstasy the worshipper identifies himself with Dionysus, with the ultimate reality, the primal unity, or whatever else we may name it ; and breaking the bonds that confine him within his individuality, he feels himself one with all things. " We are really for a brief moment ", says Nietzsche, " Primordial Being itself, feeling its raging desire for existence and joy in existence. " <sup>1</sup>

In the light of this discussion we may perhaps be able to understand a statement of Nietzsche's which at first appears more startling than intelligible. In *The Birth of Tragedy* there is given twice a formula, which we shall find repeated again after many years and many changes of opinion : " it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified " <sup>2</sup>. What does this mean ?

Certain points are clear. It implies that the world is not morally justified ; there is no moral order in the universe and no divine justice. Again, the world is not metaphysically justified ; it is not rational or ultimately intelligible. Thus, judged by moral and scientific standards it is to be condemned. But we

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iii, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 161.

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

must go further. Nietzsche does not mean that the world is beautiful in the Apollonian sense, or that by turning it into beautiful shapes and ignoring its ugliness, we may make life tolerable. It is Dionysus rather than Apollo who is in question. It is Dionysus and no other who is the artist of the world, and we, along with the rest of nature, are pictures he paints, appearances he creates — and destroys again. This process of eternal creation for ever heals the never-ending pain at the heart of things. The world in space and time, Nietzsche maintains, our own world, and our lives with all we are and do, are parts and products of this process ; and by the creation and destruction of them the tension of the world is released and turned into joy. The world, thus, is justified only from the point of view of Dionysus, who creates each thing for his pleasure, and destroys it again to create something else. Long ago Heraklitus of Ephesus had compared “ the world-building power to a playing child who placed stones here and there and builds sand castles only to knock them down again ”.<sup>1</sup> The only justification of which the world is capable is the justification which its game has for the child.

The function of tragedy for Nietzsche can now be made plain. A pure direct identification of oneself with “ the world-building power ”, with Dionysus, is too vast an achievement to be maintained for any length of time by human beings. We are not great enough to take the whole load of existence on our shoulders with all its pain. And so the Dionysian spirit, the Dionysian meaning, is projected into visible forms, into which we also project the pain and suffering, the growth, destruction and decay. And so through this Apollonian device the spectator of tragedy has something before his eyes in which he sees the Dionysian nature of reality. And taking, at least in part, the Dionysian standpoint, he may watch with exultation the prolific life which destroys itself by the conflict arising from its very superabundance. For Schopenhauer tragedy leads to sympathy and resignation ; for Nietzsche it leads to a shout of joy as the puppets are set up

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162.

## NIETZSCHE

and knocked down again. And this joy is the joy of power, the joy of the maker and mover and destroyer of the puppets, who brings them into being and removes them again in the mere wantonness of play.

This view is a startling deviation from Schopenhauer's principles ; and we can imagine the criticism and even the scorn with which that philosopher would have greeted it. He would have charged it with logical inconsistency and with attributing to the thing-in-itself qualities which can belong only to things in the phenomenal world. But he would also have added an ethical comment on Dionysus. Speaking of Pantheism, he had once said : " It must be an ill-advised God who can find no better amusement than to transform himself into a world like that before us, into such a hungry world, in order to endure sorrow, need, and death, without measure and without aim, in the shape of countless millions of living but anguished and tormented beings, who all exist for a time only by consuming one another."<sup>1</sup> And being accustomed to speak his mind plainly, he might have added : " Even if you think that the universe is created and maintained in sport by such a demented maniac, why do you identify yourself with him, and gloat with him over the futile life and destruction of nature and your fellow men ? "

Nietzsche knew this criticism of Pantheism by Schopenhauer, and no doubt he was aware of the use to which, as has just been suggested, it might be put. We have therefore to consider why he adopted his view and what was the attraction in it for him.

In discussing this question it will be useful to go back to the time when Schopenhauer first became known to Nietzsche. In 1874 Nietzsche wrote a eulogy, entitled *Schopenhauer as Educator*, and in the second section of it there occurs the following sentence : " Amid such distresses, needs, and wishes I learned to know Schopenhauer ". The reference is to October 1865, and the distresses, needs and wishes which are mentioned, and which in the preceding paragraphs had been set forth in some detail, are those which tormented Nietzsche's soul before he entered

<sup>1</sup> *Parerga*, vol. ii, § 69.

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

Leipzig, chiefly those which arose during his year at Bonn. It was during this year that he tried to emancipate himself from the limitations of his boyhood, and from the beliefs and practices of his ancestral religion — not without success ; and also endeavoured to find a positive place for himself in the world and to become a man among men — with almost complete failure.

He was in need of a philosopher to guide him, he tells us, and it will repay us if we consider more closely the nature of the guidance he felt he required. What first emerges when we study his pamphlet in praise of Schopenhauer from this point of view, is Nietzsche's feeling of the lack of any central purpose or aim in his life. As we saw in a previous chapter, he discusses rather vaguely two ideals of education ; one in which the pupil's main power is developed to the utmost, another in which all the faculties are trained as far as possible ; and Nietzsche resolves the conflict by suggesting that the two ideals are not wholly incompatible. The growth of the main interest and capacity of the pupil may require, and bring about, the development of his other faculties in a subordinate but positive ancillary relation to it. Nietzsche does not elaborate the idea, and the only thing that stands out clearly in his discussion is his own feeling of the lack in himself of any such central purpose, under the control and direction of which his other aims and powers might grow into a harmonious unity. The complete absence of reference in the discussion to Ritschl and to classical study, together with the other evidence which we have already considered, makes it evident that Nietzsche did not regard himself as having found in 1865 — or even in 1874 — an abiding central interest in life and a corresponding activity which could satisfy him.

Thus, if we look at him as he left Bonn for Leipzig, we see an emancipated youth, who had obtained some freedom by shaking off some of the old bonds that seemed to fetter him, but who had as yet no real aim, no positive content for his freedom, and who more than doubted whether the philological road on which he had set his feet would lead him to any goal that he desired. It is plain to us in retrospect that if the Classics, to which

## NIETZSCHE

he had apparently devoted his life, were to absorb his energies and give his mind an enduring satisfaction, they must present to him much the same message as he believed soon after he found in Schopenhauer. But although Nietzsche had obtained glimpses of such an ideal, this vision had not yet become something which he could see steadily, fit to be the main content of the study of antiquity ; and he remained in a state of indecision, unrest and disappointment.

In his dissatisfaction — still persisting in 1874 — he turned round on the educational institutions in which he had been brought up, laying on them the responsibility for the disharmony in his life and for his failure to find a suitable and even commanding place in the world. And he poured out his scorn upon them. The high schools of Germany, accordingly, the Gymnasias, are described mildly as antiquated institutions, and the teachers in them, less mildly as a collection of freaks. The Universities are no better — indeed, one might even suspect them of being worse, for Nietzsche suffered more and his failure of adjustment was more conspicuous at Bonn than at Pforta. At Bonn Nietzsche had failed to establish for himself a place in the student world, and in spite of his best efforts, the glowing freedom of the mildly Dionysian revels of *Franconia* had turned into an uncongenial and degrading beer-materialism. For this result Nietzsche, in effect, decides that the Universities, and of course the teachers in them, are to be blamed. The professors have failed to make him a man among men, therefore it must be that they go about their business badly. They devote themselves to their subjects, Nietzsche declares, rather than to their students, they have sacrificed themselves to science, something intrinsically inhuman, and by this premature and senseless surrender of their personalities have ceased to be normal human beings and have become mis-shapen and distorted. In the extremity of his annoyance, Nietzsche calls them “ crooked ” and “ humpbacked ”.

No doubt the educational institutions of Germany were open to reproach, and much improvement was possible in them ; no doubt also a similar statement could be made at most times

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

about most countries. But the important thing to notice is that Nietzsche is not giving an objective picture of his school and University or examining them on their merits, he is projecting into them the divisions and deficiencies which he finds in his own soul. The problems which perplex him *must* also perplex the learned men of the time, and if these scholars show little or no sign of this, the reason can only be that they are mockers or hypocrites. Looking ahead, we may note the vituperation which Nietzsche pours on those who, having found something to do in the world, throw themselves into it with all their might, and are satisfied with the fruit of their labours. No doubt there are other elements present in Nietzsche's complex and changing attitude to life, but there can be little doubt that one persistent factor in it is the envy which he feels of the man who finds the world friendly and is at home in it. Nietzsche believes, or tries to believe, that his failure to find a satisfactory harmony cannot be his own fault but must be that of the external world, and that those who seem to find life satisfactory and organise their activities into harmony can do so only because they dissemble or because their natures are shallow.

In the pamphlet on Schopenhauer, Nietzsche accuses Christianity of being partly responsible for the conflict which disturbs him. Christianity is being overcome — but he insists that it has a retroactive effect on his mind. Its high ideals offered more to men than did those of Paganism, and made men feel disgust for the "naturalism" of pre-Christian times. This statement, together with those which follow it, should be taken out of the past to which it ostensibly refers, and applied to the immediate present, which really occupied the centre of Nietzsche's attention. What he says amounts in effect to this. The ideals of the religion in which he has been brought up have had a restricting and confining influence on him. When the positive natural satisfactions of life in due course made an appeal to him — and these he identified broadly with the "virtues" of antiquity — he was made incapable of achieving the naive and direct attitude of mind necessary for their full appreciation. "And so", says



## NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche, "modern man"—and he really speaks of himself—"lives in this movement to and fro between the Christian and the ancient, between a timorous and deceitful Christianity of custom and an equally spiritless and embarrassed cult of antiquity and fares badly therein."<sup>1</sup>

But if we look more closely we may question the complete accuracy of Nietzsche's diagnosis of his own case. He speaks of the conflict which disturbed his mind as one between the "inherited fear of the natural" and the "renewed incitement of this natural", adding as other factors the desire to have a solid basis on which to rest and the weakness, almost the collapse, of his knowledge, which is alleged to reel back and forward between "the good" and "the better"—all of which, as he rightly indicates, are capable of producing an unrest in the soul. Nor, in a way, is there anything unusual in this, and much of it is a forcible picture of the trouble of the adolescent; but in view of its persistence in Nietzsche's life and thought—as if he were an adolescent who could not grow up—we may ask more precisely what he means. In particular what does he refer to when he speaks of "the natural", the enjoyment of which is prevented by Christianity? Let us put the matter plainly. Does he mean the natural indulgence of desires and impulses with no respect for the rights of others or for what is regarded as social decency? If so, there is little reason to believe that Nietzsche's statement is true, when he lays the responsibility on Christianity for this restraint. We may ask, for example, did he wish to let himself go in social revelry? Well, he tried to do so in *Franconia*; he drank, he sang, he dressed himself up and marched in procession, like primitive man in modern costume. But he did not really enjoy it, and what turned him against it was not a faith inherited from his fathers, or any social scruples, but his temperamental and constitutional inability to enter thoroughly into the spirit of it.

Or again, are the natural virtues which he commends, those of the bloodthirsty slayer, the warrior and the man of the sword?

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 46.

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

If so, it is not surprising that he fought his duel ; and he was free to spill his own blood again, and some of that of his fellows, if he so desired. But after the first experiment he gave it up ; and it was not Christianity that prevented him from becoming a swordsman, and even a swashbuckler ; it was rather his own defective eyesight and the inherent stupidity of the performance.

Or once again, is he hinting obscurely at sexual licence ? Now, it is possible, and if certain evidence to be considered later is reliable, it is probable, that on two occasions in 1866 he incurred the risk of syphilitic infection ; but this occurred, if anywhere, at Leipzig, not at Bonn, and these two occasions seem to have been the limit of his youthful experience in this direction. There is a story in Deussen's *Recollections* which is relevant here. Nietzsche, by mischance it is said, when on a visit to Cologne from Bonn was once taken by a cabman to a wrong address, and found himself in a house of ill-fame. " Suddenly ", he told Deussen, " I found myself surrounded by half a dozen creatures in tinsel and gauze, who gazed at me expectantly. For a moment I stood absolutely dumbfounded in front of them ; then, as if driven by instinct, I went to the piano as to the only thing with a soul in the whole company and struck one or two chords. The music quickened my limbs and in an instant I was out in the open." What drove him out so quickly — or if one likes to think of it otherwise, so slowly ? Was it Christianity, or was it a natural fastidiousness and temperamental distaste for " the natural " ? That the latter is the true explanation is suggested by all that we know of Nietzsche's relationships to women, and particularly to marriageable young women of his acquaintance. Christianity — at least the Protestant form of it in which Nietzsche was brought up — can hardly be made responsible for an ideal of universal celibacy. And yet, if his sister's evidence is to be relied upon, here is the story of Nietzsche's nearest approach to matrimony — with the possible exception of a proposal made by proxy to Lou Salomé, to be discussed later.

In the spring of 1876 Nietzsche spent a month recuperating at Montreux and Geneva from a bout of ill-health. He then met

## NIETZSCHE

a young lady from Holland, whose name is not given us, but who is designated by Nietzsche's sister as Miss Tr. After a very brief acquaintanceship, including a four-hours walk in Geneva, Nietzsche proposed to her. But he waited till the last day of the holiday before doing so, and he sent his proposal in a letter. Moreover, before taking this step, he consulted a friend, who greatly admired the lady, and who ultimately married her. Nietzsche wrote on the evening of his departure, knowing that it was unlikely that the lady could reply to him before he left town. After a mild protestation of affection, he asked her "Would you dare to walk shoulder to shoulder with me as with one who strives heartily after emancipation and improvement, along all the paths of life and of thought?" The young lady, it may be remarked parenthetically, greatly enjoyed Longfellow's *Excelsior*, and had been copying out the poem. Nietzsche's letter concludes thus :

"To-morrow morning at eleven A.M. I shall take the express back to Basle : I must get back ; I therefore send you my address there. If you find you can accept my proposal, I shall write to your mother immediately, in which case I must beg you to give me her address. If you are able to come to a prompt decision one way or another, a note from you will find me at the Hôtel de la Porte till ten. Wishing you every joy and blessing for ever.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE."<sup>1</sup>

A sudden but hardly an ardent lover. Surely it was not Christianity but temperament that restrained "the natural" in him.

If we look back in Nietzsche's life to his early schooldays, when he tried in vain to mix with common boys, and if we follow him through Pforta, to Bonn with its *Franconia*, to Leipzig with its army interlude, and into Basle, it is difficult to believe that anything other than Nietzsche himself restrained him from the enjoyment of "the natural", or to doubt that his failure to manifest the pagan virtues was due to anything but his own

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 392.

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

constitution. When he cries vociferously that the world is out of joint, we may conclude he is even more out of joint with it, and it is this latter cleavage which really troubles him. Christianity prohibited many things, but it was not the main cause of Nietzsche's inhibitions. The truth is rather that he makes Christianity — in 1872 and even 1874 by implication, but later with full explicitness — a scapegoat for the world's sin, the one-sidedness which gives him a sense of inferiority and weakness.

It is natural that in a man of this type, gifted, ambitious, sensitive, fiercely intolerant in thought, who in spite of all his successes is not at home in general society, and who feels himself impotent or almost impotent in action, there should at times burst through the even tenor of life, flashes of desire, in which this weakness and impotence vanish and crude strength and activity appear as the glory and crown of things.

Let us look back. Let us consider again the young student of Leipzig in 1866, climbing the hill in the impending storm, and revelling in the slaughter of the young goats, in the flash of the lightning and the roar of the thunder. Nietzsche wrote of this experience at the time as if his attitude came from Schopenhauer, but even then it was from the experience of the sublime as Schopenhauer understood it ; the desire to wanton and revel in the exhibition of power is opposed in spirit to the resignation which for Schopenhauer is the mark of the good life, and constitutes an assertion rather than a denial of the will to live. Even at this early date Nietzsche was a heretic, and the doctrine of *The Birth of Tragedy* was present in germ.

Let us look at him again in his brief war experience in 1870, the short-sighted, rather awkward, ex-soldier, now a mere comforter of the sick, standing at the corner of the stone wall as the might of the German army thundered past him in its splendour and power. Do we need to go further than these experiences and the steady undercurrent from which they spring, to understand why Nietzsche not only regarded the world as the out-pouring of limitless irrational power, but also wished to identify himself with it ?

## NIETZSCHE

Not infrequently do men frame a Heaven from materials which are but scantily present in their actual lives, and long ardently for joys which the hard world yields to them in exceedingly small measure ; and in thus creating an ideal out of their own deficiencies they often omit from it the strong and solid but commoner elements on which the value of life also depends. Their Heaven is thus a habitation for them only in unusual moments, when despondency has to be transformed into glory : it is in no sense a continuing city in which they might be lastingly at home.

To this tendency Nietzsche was no exception. The power he lacked in himself he found in Dionysus, ascribing also to that god the ruthlessness, the caprice, the full-bloodedness, of which he himself had but small share. And this god he worshipped.

Such in *The Birth of Tragedy* is Nietzsche's creed, and in that book all the elements which we have considered may be discerned. One instance may be enough here. In the first section Nietzsche describes the Dionysian revel, and after a reference to the ecstasy of drunkenness, and to the singing, dancing, mediaeval crowds in which the Bacchic choruses and the orgies of the East came to life again, he feels, from within himself, the inevitable criticism which the "healthy man" will make. "There are people", he says, "who from want of experience or from dullness of sense, will turn away in the feeling of their own healthiness from these phenomena, mocking or regretting them : but of course, such poor creatures have no idea how corpse-like and ghostly this 'healthiness' of theirs looks, when the glowing life of the Dionysian revels rushes past them." Is not this a criticism and eulogy by a reveller who could not revel, a Bacchanal who could not drink, a sick man who could not even dance ? There are other elements in Nietzsche's life and philosophy than those we have as yet considered, but this one, the overwhelming, irrepressible desire for an activity, for a vitality and a power, which externally he almost completely lacked, is a fundamental driving force that endured till the end.

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

Before concluding this chapter it may be useful to compare Nietzsche briefly with Schopenhauer.

In certain ways the two men resemble one another. Both on the whole were solitary beings, not well adapted to a common life, where compromise and tolerance modify and compensate for the abstractedness and one-sidedness of the individual's ideas and outlook ; and as the years went on they both became more isolated from the community at large, and though they lived in it were not of it. Temperamentally both men were out of touch with their own times — untimely or unseasonable men, as Nietzsche puts it — and probably would have been so in almost any age of the world's history. Nietzsche emphasises this point with regard to Schopenhauer, and with himself also in mind, refers to the immense burden which the sense of loneliness and isolation lays upon the soul, and the spiritual danger to which it may lead. But it must be admitted that his description here is truer of himself than of Schopenhauer, and a certain difference between the two men must be noted. Schopenhauer was a less dependent man by nature than Nietzsche and suffered less from isolation. He chose his hermitage, as it were, with more care than Nietzsche, and looked out from its barred windows with more comfort and with a more confident sense of superiority.

Secondly, neither man had any vocation in life other than that of preaching his own gospel, and neither had an established and recognised pulpit from which to preach it. Neither had an occupation in life in which he could find heart-felt satisfaction. Schopenhauer tried to become a University teacher of Philosophy, and failed ignominiously. With great self-confidence he set himself up in rivalry to Hegel, when the latter was at the height of his fame, and to his mortification he was passed by and neglected, both by the students and by the general public. Nietzsche began his career successfully as a teacher, but, as we know, he doubted from the outset if he had chosen the right subject to profess and in due course he was forced by ill-health to resign his chair. Both men thus, in a sense, were functionless. They had a philosophy to develop and to teach, but the world

## NIETZSCHE

did not seem to have room for them. As they did not accommodate themselves to it, so it did not accommodate itself to them ; it was unsympathetic, alien, stupid, even irrational.

Thirdly, both men were inwardly extremely ambitious, and in consequence intolerant. Both made the largest demands on the Universe, framing schemes according to which it was to proceed ; and in each case the theories put forth were derived not from pure reason but from inward need. Their philosophies were for them an overpowering passion of their lives, and men were measured and estimated largely by their willingness to accept the scheme of things thus offered to them. In Nietzsche's case we shall see this tendency more fully at work in the sequel.

Fourthly, and partly in consequence of the points already mentioned, both men were frank and outspoken. Both naturally had an introspective bias, and both thought and spoke candidly of themselves, Schopenhauer perhaps being the more remarkable in this respect. Nietzsche at times had more reticence than Schopenhauer, and when, as was not uncommon, his ideas were changing, he could wear a mask for a time and speak and even write in more than one strain. But he could not wear the mask constantly, and when he tore it off, he could be as blunt and wounding as Schopenhauer himself. Again, however, there is a difference which enters into the agreement. In Schopenhauer there is much calm scientific writing, where personal issues do not obtrude but remain at a distance, so that arguments may be considered in accordance with their merits. And when personal emotion enters in it is usually so obvious that the reader is placed on his guard. With Nietzsche, however, this is not so ; in his writing there is no detachment at all. He is behind everything he says, with his passions, his sufferings, his desires ; and if these are not the direct object of thought, they are in the immediate background and provide the object with its setting and its meaning.

In spite of their likenesses the two men differed profoundly. Living, as they believed, and perhaps as they discovered, in an irrational world, and making unmeasured claims against that

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

world, their lives became inevitably inwardly divided, and an ideal was set over against the actual. But this opposition of ideal and actual did not take the same form in the two men. In Schopenhauer's case the two aspects — for convenience let us call them the lower and the higher — alternated with one another, and ruled him in turn. Speaking perhaps superficially, we might say that he had many bad qualities which Nietzsche escaped. Nietzsche's manners were good, and personally he was courteous and attentive; Schopenhauer, especially as a young man, was argumentative, arrogant, and at times insufferable. Nietzsche, although self-centred, was fair and even generous in money matters; Schopenhauer, although not avaricious, could be inconsiderate of others, suspicious, unforgiving and mean. Nietzsche's passions were under control, and as we shall see later, his outbursts and departures from normality were both unusual and grotesque; Schopenhauer, on the contrary, was largely governed by his passions and frequently gave way to them. His sexual impulses were strong, and his irregularities were many and unattractive. He was the kind of sinner who sins and repents, and sins again, and repents again, interminably. The division in his life thus broke it into parts, in which the lower and the higher were manifested separately at different times. This quality of him, and the form which his conflicts with himself took, show at times in his philosophy, and one passage may perhaps be quoted. It was written by him towards the end of his main book, as he approached the climax of his argument. He refers to the analysis which he has previously made of the perception of the beautiful, according to which the beholder, in perceiving the object of beauty, is lifted out of himself, and, being freed for the moment from the incessant demands of the will and the dominion of everyday life and things, acquires a wider self and becomes a counterpart of the eternal Idea which the beautiful object manifests. Then he goes on: "And we know that these moments in which, released from the furious cravings of the will, we rise, as it were, out of the heavy earthly aether, are the most blessed that we experience. From this we



## NIETZSCHE

can realise how blessed must be the life of a man whose will is silenced, not for a moment as in the enjoyment of the beautiful, but for ever ; yes, is wholly extinguished, all but that last glimmering spark which sustains the body, and becomes extinguished with it. Such a man, who, after many bitter conflicts with his own nature, at length gains the victory, continues to exist only as a being who merely knows, an undimmed mirror of the world." None but a man to whom a continuously realised ideal was utterly remote, and who despaired of conquering his passions, could in the prime of life hold a conception like this before him as the goal and end of existence. Such a man was Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, lacked the open divisions into which Schopenhauer's life fell. His conflicts remained within him and did not split his behaviour into separate parts. Schopenhauer was now an active sinner, now an aspiring saint ; Nietzsche was saint and sinner at once, and was cramped and restrained in both aspects. His lower nature, not lusty like that of Schopenhauer, did not break out into independent life, and, in complete contrast to Schopenhauer, he lacked the power to give himself up to his impulses. Schopenhauer could enjoy himself one day, and sorrow for it on the next ; Nietzsche enjoyed and sorrowed at the same time. And, elevating his experience into a theory, he preached the enjoyment of the sorrow. Thus it was, perhaps, that the Promethean myth had a strong fascination for him, the ancient story of the Titan suffering at the hands of Zeus for his theft of fire from Heaven. There is an irreconcilable antagonism between man and God, Nietzsche tells us, and in their conflict both are justified. Prometheus became the founder of culture and the benefactor of the human race by his act, and he was justified in his theft. But it *was* a theft, and Zeus was justified in his punishment of it. "The best and highest of which men can partake, they must achieve by a crime, and must then in turn endure the consequences, namely, the whole flood of sufferings and griefs with which the offended heavenly ones *must* visit the noble upward striving human race." And so, he adds, "*active*

## THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY

sin " is the " special Promethean virtue ".<sup>1</sup> It is a paradoxical conception, but it reveals the heart of Nietzsche. Not good here and bad there, but good and bad alike everywhere — in Heaven, on earth and in the heart of man. There is a never-discharged tension in Nietzsche's life, and it is this tension, magnified and projected, which appears as a strife and antagonism in the heart of things, and which, personified, is Dionysus.

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. i, § 68.

## X

### GREEK CULTURE

NIETZSCHE's view of Greek antiquity is set forth not only in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but also in several smaller writings, most of which were not published until after his death. The chief of these are *The Greek State*, written in 1871, *Homer's Contest*, written in 1872, and *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, a course of lectures given more than once to his University class and put into final shape in 1873. In addition something may be learned from his Inaugural Address in 1869, and from a series of notes, dating from 1874 and 1875, and entitled *We Philologists*.

Even during this short period Nietzsche's conceptions were not quite fixed. In *The Greek State*, which consists of portions intended for his first book and set aside when the manuscript was altered to become *The Birth of Tragedy*, there are traces at certain points of a slightly greater adherence to Schopenhauer than is manifested in the latter work ; whereas in the later writings, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* and *We Philologists*, the breach with Schopenhauer is gradually widened, and probably became more apparent to Nietzsche himself.

During the period which is covered by these works, 1869 to 1874 or 1875, Nietzsche was in fairly close contact with his colleague, Jacob Burckhardt, some of whose lectures he attended, and with whom he had many informative discussions. As we have already seen, Nietzsche came to Basle with a general outlook on Greek culture already largely formed in his mind, so that the views which he developed and set forth in the period under consideration were largely the logical outcome of the point of view with which he began, and the changes in them were the natural result of the progress of his own thinking. But he was greatly influenced by Burckhardt. He and Burckhardt were both under

## GREEK CULTURE

the spell of Schopenhauer, and although, unlike Nietzsche, Burckhardt held philosophical speculation far off from his historical treatment, giving apparently a quiet, sober, unemotional description and analysis, yet at the back of his account there are judgments and standards of value which seem to derive from Schopenhauer himself. How much Nietzsche owed at this time to Burckhardt it is difficult to say. It is possible, of course, to compare the writings of the two men, and to attribute to Burckhardt's influence everything in Nietzsche which is to be found in any prior writing of Burckhardt. But however satisfactory such a procedure is in deciding claims to literary or scientific priority, it is inconclusive in considering the origin of thought in the individual's mind. It seems probable that the views put forward by Nietzsche in the writings of this period are almost entirely his own, and their agreement with those of Burckhardt was a delight to both men. There is, however, one probable exception to this, the treatment of power ; and even here, as we shall see when we come to discuss it, the judgment which Nietzsche adopted was required by his own fundamental attitude to life.

Unlike Burckhardt, Nietzsche began explicitly from philosophical principles, and his whole treatment is related to them. These principles are partly those set forth in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but they are not altogether identical with them : they involve, as we shall see, a difference of emphasis in the treatment of art, a difference of which the importance was probably not realised by Nietzsche himself. This will appear in the sequel.

It has been said above that Nietzsche accepted the ordinary conception put forth by teachers of the Classics, that the ancient Greek world affords to men of all times a pattern of excellence and artistic beauty, and it is in this spirit that in his Inaugural Address he called upon the artists to aid him against the Philistines who fail to see " the unutterable simplicity and noble dignity of the Hellenic ". But when, with his own peculiar rendering of Schopenhauer's philosophy in his heart and his head, he looked closely at those Greeks, he discovered in them very different

## NIETZSCHE

virtues from those for which they had hitherto been honoured. It was only on the surface that the Hellene was simple, and his nobility rested on ignoble foundations.

We have three things to consider : firstly, Nietzsche's description of Greek life and culture ; secondly, the philosophy by which Nietzsche prefaces it ; and thirdly, the motives behind both the description and the philosophy. We may begin as Nietzsche does, with the philosophy ; and since much of the argument turns on it, we may be allowed a little repetition.

We have already considered in the previous chapter Nietzsche's distinction between the Dionysian and Apollonian attitudes to life, the intoxicated revel and the dream ; and we have also seen that they embody themselves in separate forms of art. Separated, however, they are incomplete, and in the world of art they act and react on one another until they combine in the form in which they both reach their highest power, namely, tragedy. In this union the Dionysian attitude is the primary factor or element : it induces in the artist a self-forgetting state of consciousness, in which he identifies himself with the primitive unity with all its pain ; and, becoming more conscious of this pain, he expresses it in music, and thus tends to alleviate it. Alleviation by expression is the fundamental doctrine here. But the first expression of the primitive pain in music is not enough, and so music itself produces a second form of expression, this time Apollonian in character, in the drama.

This we have already found in considering *The Birth of Tragedy*, but Nietzsche now returns from art to life, and applies his conception directly to reality again. Dionysian man, we know, is he " who, having in complete self-forgetfulness become one with the primal basis of the world, now creates out of its original pain, a reflection of it, for its redemption ".<sup>1</sup> But setting Dionysian man and his special form of expression — the choral dance — aside, Nietzsche turns to Dionysus and the direct expression which he provides for himself, viz. the empirical world as a whole. What the song and dance are to the reveller, the

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iii, p. 275.

## GREEK CULTURE

whole world of our waking lives, in space, time, and under the sway of causality, is to the primal reality, to Dionysus. It is the first appearance. And just as the first appearance is not enough for the Dionysian artist, so that he must complete himself by an Apollonian achievement, the ordinary waking world is not enough for Dionysus, and does not fully alleviate his pain — or, if we like it better, his lust for expression. And thus there arises the second appearance, the world of dreams. The dream is thus the waking world carried a stage further, and accordingly it is superior to the latter. Of course, it is not more “real” or more “true” in the ordinary sense of these words; but Nietzsche is not considering truth and reality in the ordinary sense at the moment. He is thinking in terms of expression and of alleviation of pain by expression, and his argument is that the second expression, which goes beyond the first, does the work more thoroughly and is therefore superior. This second appearance is therefore necessary to reality, and the first expression may be regarded as a preparation for it, a means to it.

This is a strange result, and if Nietzsche had cared to follow it up, he might have been led to some interesting conclusions. In the first place he might have been led to revise Schopenhauer's pessimistic conception of the futility of human existence, for the ordinary world, as the expression of the primal unity, although only the first expression, must afford Dionysus some satisfaction, and be of value. And secondly, he might have inquired what organisation of society would be most conducive to vivid and continual dreaming by mankind. But he let the opportunity slide, and having made his point he rather hurriedly abandoned it for another one. The dream, he has told us, is a form of Apollonian activity, and he passes from it to more orthodox forms of Apollonian expression, viz. the plastic arts. He therefore concludes that the function of the ordinary world, the world of ordinary people, is to produce Apollonian artists. In Apollonian art, which is a second appearance, the primitive reality, Dionysus, finds his final satisfaction and expression; and everything else in the universe has to be regarded as a means, relative to which

### NIETZSCHE

the life and activity of the artist — the Genus, as Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, calls him — is the end.

There are certain difficulties here — apart from the general difficulty of the conception of Dionysus as a whole ; and before we continue the analysis further a brief reference to them may be advisable.

First of all, by reversing the direction of Schopenhauer's path to salvation, and turning it from an inward, returning, negative movement into an outward, expressive, affirmative one, Nietzsche takes away such metaphysical justification as Schopenhauer had for regarding ordinary life as wretched and worthless. If ultimate reality, Dionysus, finds satisfaction by expressing itself in the empirical world, that world from the ultimate point of view, the point of view of Dionysus, must be good, though perhaps not the whole good. Nietzsche, however, ignores the difficulty. He asserts that ordinary existence in itself has *no* value — any value it may seem to have is due to the fact that it supplies a starting-point for the dream-like world of the artist, the second appearance. Nietzsche gives no reason for this. He asserts it merely because he had learned it from Schopenhauer, and because it was in accordance with his temperamental outlook. From a theoretical point of view, however, the point is of vital importance.

Secondly, Nietzsche's theory at this stage implies, although it does not definitely state, that the Apollonian art and artists are greater, more final, more valuable, than the Dionysian. The former provide the second appearance in which Dionysus is finally satisfied, and, for ultimate reality, that is all that matters. Dionysian art merely provides means whereby a few wretched human beings may place themselves in part and for a moment at his point of view, but for Dionysus this has no meaning. He, of course, is already at the Dionysian point of view, and it is nothing to him that a few human revellers are trying to share his ecstasies. Dionysian art thus is a make-shift for human beings — who are of no intrinsic importance in Nietzsche's scheme of things — Apollonian art is a device to satisfy Dionysus himself,

## GREEK CULTURE

and as such is of absolute value. If, out of courtesy, we call Dionysus a god, Nietzsche's philosophy is theocentric, as theocentric as that of Calvin, a doctrine which in a certain respect it resembles.

It should be clear to us at this stage that Nietzsche has two points of view : one by which he explains tragedy, another by which he acclaims the artist — and of necessity the Apollonian artist — as the end of creation. Nietzsche does not attempt to reconcile the two attitudes, and seems even to be unconscious of their difference. In his account of Greek antiquity as a whole he tries to take an absolute point of view, to see the world and value it as Dionysus himself does ; consequently it is the Apollonian aspect that is of importance. The Dionysian activities and the Dionysian artist do appear on the scene now and again, but properly speaking they ought to be regarded as interlopers. Their peculiar value is in no sense absolute, and can be appreciated only from the human point of view : to Dionysus only the Apollonian element in it, the final stage, can have any worth.

Here, however, we may leave the matter for the present, and after our flight through the thin metaphysical air, we may return to more solid ground by asking to what purpose Nietzsche employed these philosophic doctrines, and to what views of ancient and modern life they led.

The value of Greek society for Nietzsche lay in one thing, and one thing only : it was the most efficient mechanism the world has yet known for producing geniuses, and by this term Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, means artists. The artist according to Nietzsche, who again follows Schopenhauer, is not and cannot be a man of the world. The artist, Schopenhauer had said, was a man of great intellectual capacity, who had freed himself from the dominion of the will for a moment, set his individuality aside, and became a passionless spectator of the reality in and behind phenomena. Nietzsche changed much of this conception, but he retained some of the features of it. He tends to accept Schopenhauer's notion that the artist is not well adapted to ordinary life, although, of course, he prefers to emphasise it in the reversed form, that ordinary life is not adapted to



the artist. Art and the ends of everyday existence, he insists, are incompatible : one cannot work for one's living and be an artist.

It follows from this that if artists are to develop and continue in existence, some special provision must be made for them : their living must be secured to them and their wants must be satisfied by the superfluous goods provided by less gifted beings. The state, therefore, must be so organised that there is a small upper privileged class of artistic beings, supplied freely with all that is necessary for their cultured existence, and a large lower, non-privileged, labouring class, whose function is to minister to the others. Greek society rested on slavery, and therein, Nietzsche argued, it conformed to a necessity which governs every true culture. If culture is to flourish, society must be divided into two classes, the bond and the free, and the bondsmen must be so organised that they form, as it were, a social pyramid, the apex of which is the genius. Only the apex is of value, the rest is merely a means to uphold him.

This conception implies that the great mass of men have no inherent value, they are justified only as a means to the well-being of others. Their labour, therefore, is a badge of their servitude, and their existence is itself a misery. This, says Nietzsche, the Greeks also realised. To them, he insists, all work, even the work of the artist, was degrading, something of which, although it may be necessary, one feels ashamed. Both slavery and labour, he says, " were considered by them as a necessary disgrace, of which one feels shame, at once a disgrace and a necessity. . . . Culture, which is pre-eminently a true need for art, rests upon a terrible basis : the latter, however, lets itself be known in the dim feeling of shame. In order that there may be a broad, deep, fruitful soil for a development of art, the vast majority must be slavishly subjected to the misery of life, beyond the measure of their individual need, in the service of a minority. At their expense, through their surplus labour, that privileged class is to be freed from the struggle for existence, in order to create and satisfy a new world of needs. Accordingly we must be able to accept here as a cruelly sounding truth that

## GREEK CULTURE

slavery belongs to the essence of a culture.”<sup>1</sup>

It follows from this that the proper organisation of society rests on force, and this force is exercised by the state. The Greek city state, therefore, for Nietzsche, was the means by which culture was preserved. But for the achievement of this end it was necessary that the force should be exerted in the right direction, namely, on the subordinated class and not on the geniuses themselves. This, Nietzsche thinks, the Greek state did. It did not assume that the artist was a servant of the state or that devotion to the state was the end of life : on the contrary it regarded the state primarily as a means to the well-being of the ruling class.

But for the promotion of art it is not enough to have a state governed in the interests of a ruling class ; other conditions must also be satisfied. Here again the Greek is an example to us. Greek art in a wide sense of the term was public and not private. “ The Greek artist in his art production addressed himself not to the individual but to the state ; and moreover, the education of the state is nothing but the education of all to enjoy the artistic production. All great creations of sculpture and architecture, as well as of the musical arts, have in view great popular sensibilities nourished by the state. In particular tragedy is an annual, solemnly prepared, activity on the part of the state, bringing the whole people together. The state was a necessary means to the realisation of art.”<sup>2</sup> Obviously a very delicate balance is implied here. The art has to be public, it has to be addressed to the free community as a whole, under conditions the means and nature of which the state controls : and yet at the same time the state must avoid controlling the art itself, and it must refrain from making the art or the artistic production a means to its own preservation. The Greek city state, Nietzsche held, maintained this balance.

But even this condition is not enough : there must be a motive to artistic production. This is found in rivalry and competition. The prize of excellence is honour, honour paid to a victor, to his city, to his tribe, to his family. Thus, in Nietzsche’s view, the dominating motive in Greek life was ambition, and

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iii, p. 280 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 286 f.

## NIETZSCHE

every natural gift was developed by contest. The actual material prizes were often very slight, the chief reward being public honour and glory ; and this glory was increased by the glory it brought to the victor's gratified city and clansmen. Greek life was not merely a struggle of individuals, it was also a struggle of communities, and the youth learned to strive for his own glory and that of his city, his tribe and his family at one and the same time. "The youth", says Nietzsche, "thought of the welfare of his mother city when he ran, or threw, or sang in a contest : he wished to increase its fame in his own : and to the city gods he dedicated the wreaths which the judges placed on his brow in honour."<sup>1</sup> This rivalry entered deeply into art. "Distrustfully jealous," says Nietzsche, "the great musical masters Pindar and Simonides paced side by side ; in rivalry the Sophist, the higher teacher of antiquity, met the other Sophists : even the most universal form of instruction, through the drama, was communicated to the people only under the form of a vast wrestling of the great musical and dramatic artists."

One final point remains. What Greek life sought to produce was not one dominant artist, but a free artistic life where genius would proliferate to the utmost. At best the number must be small, but all must be given an opportunity of development ; and hence anyone who threatened to outshine all his fellows and establish himself so far above them that competition with him was impossible, was to be regarded as a danger to the whole. "Among us", Nietzsche quotes, "nobody shall be best ; if, however, someone is best, then let him be so elsewhere and among others."<sup>2</sup> Thus the final mechanism for the production of geniuses is ostracism.

Works, vol. ii, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche does not give the whole quotation, and when it is completed it carries with it a comment which Nietzsche prefers to ignore. It comes from Heraclitus — Fragment 121 in Diels' *Fragmente d. Vorsokratiker* — and is rendered by Burnet as follows : "The Ephesians would do well to hang themselves, every grown man of them, and leave the city to beardless lads ; for they have cast out Hermodorus, the best man among them, saying, 'We will have none who is best among us ; if there be any such, let him be so elsewhere and among others.'"

## GREEK CULTURE

Such is Nietzsche's conception of the way in which the Greek state fostered genius : the subordination and enslavement of the great majority to enable a small class to live above the reach of want in abundant leisure ; the social character given to art, in that it was directed to the public and shown in public places and on public occasions ; the fostering of rivalry between artists and the coupling of their success with the glory of their communities, with the consequent approval of them by their fellows ; and finally the removal of anyone who, by too great success, might discourage others. But how does a state which exercises these functions come into being, and what are the conditions which enable it to continue to exist ? Nietzsche's answer to this question involves several points.

Greek civilisation was one of the highest the world has seen ; nevertheless the Greeks were not far from barbarism, only the wall of the city lay between them and it. Behind the classical age lay the age of the migrations, restless movements by land and sea of warring and displaced tribes, seeking new lands and homes, and leaving behind them many of the old sanctities and decencies. " The heroic age " is this period idealised, seen, as it were, at a safe distance through a haze from a point of vantage within the city wall. Thucydides knew something of the truth ; and after referring at the beginning of his history to the unsettled condition of early Greek life, the disunion, the frequent conquests and changes of masters, the piracy, the lack of communications, he adds : " And there are many other points in which a likeness may be shown between the life of the Hellenic world of old and the barbarian of to-day ".

Nietzsche realised this, as no doubt did also many of the scholars of his time, but he differed from others through his perception that the savage spirit was also to be found within the city itself, and by his belief that it was an essential characteristic of the Greek. " Thus the Greeks," he says, " the most humane men of ancient times, have in them a trait of cruelty, a tiger-like delight in destruction."<sup>1</sup> And again : " When in a battle of

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. ii, p. 369.

## NIETZSCHE

cities, the victor according to the *law* of war, executes all the male citizens and sells all the women and children into slavery, we see in the sanction of such a law that the Greek regarded the full outpouring of his hatred as a serious necessity : in such moments the compressed and tense feeling was relieved : the tiger rushed forward, a voluptuous cruelty shone in his fearsome eye. Why had the Greek sculptor to set forth again and again war and strife in endless repetitions, stretched out bodies, with sinews strained by hatred or the arrogance of triumph, the wounded in their writhing, the dying at their last gasp ? Why did the whole Greek world shout with joy at the battle pictures of the Iliad ? I fear we do not understand these pictures sufficiently in the Greek fashion ; indeed that we would shudder if we ever had so understood them.”<sup>1</sup>

The Greek, Nietzsche believed, was cruel and pitiless ; and it was on this soil of inhumanity, envy, greed and hate that there was built the city state, the fairest dwelling ever seen on earth. But how, one may ask, is this possible ? Nietzsche’s answer is brief : by force and violence. The state was founded by conquest and was maintained by armed power, for only a tyrant could have compressed society into that pyramidal shape, where the apex is the genius and the broad base the slave. Democracy, or even the free consent of the governed, is thus for Nietzsche a futile dream. By force and force alone can a real state be maintained.

Moreover, although in the state, within the city walls and within sight of the law, the primitive form of rivalry was suppressed, robbery and murder forbidden, and peace maintained ; yet the inherent, fundamental rapacity was not destroyed, but merely diverted into social channels. The rivalry on which the well-being of culture depended, springs from the ruthless ambition of men, their directed and controlled but untransformed greed and envy. What Nietzsche calls “ the political spirit ” arose in Greece from this ruthless struggle, and was indeed only a form of it. It led also to rivalry between communities, prevented the

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. ii, p. 370.

## GREEK CULTURE

growth of one over-ruling power, and tended to keep the states small. The separate, competing, and often warring Greek city states presented to Nietzsche's eyes an almost perfect embodiment of the true political spirit.

Thus Nietzsche was led to a defence and glorification of war ; not war for specific valuable ends, self-defence, freedom, definite rights, but war for its own sake, merely to keep the fighting spirit alive. His argument appears to be that only if the fundamental cupidity and aggressiveness of man is thus nourished by bloodthirsty combat between states, can the political spirit be kept sufficiently strong to maintain within the state itself the modified and socialised form of it by means of which art is engendered and encouraged. And so once again Nietzsche called for a delicate balance of forces : states must fight one another, presumably at frequent intervals, but none must finally conquer. It was disunited Greece that Nietzsche admired, and not united victorious Macedon or imperial Rome.

Nietzsche believes and insists that the picture he has drawn is an appalling one, and he dwells, not without relish, on its gruesome character. Men, in his view, are not fundamentally changed by civilisation ; or, if they are, it is for the worse, they lose strength and become poor in spirit. Hence he compares the splendid culture of Greece itself to a conqueror, reeking with blood, who, in his triumphal march, drags the conquered with him as slaves fettered to his car.

The Greeks themselves, according to Nietzsche, recognised this. Of all people that have ever lived they were the most sensitive, not only to beauty, but also to pain, suffering and horror. And throughout their literature there runs a strain of profound pessimism, expressed in imperishable language by Theognis of Megara, the poet to whom Nietzsche had devoted great attention at Schulpforta : " The best lot of all for man is never to have been born, nor seen the beams of the burning sun ; failing this, to pass the gates of Hades as soon as he may, and lie under a goodly heap of earth ".

It might even be said that all the greatest Greek literature tells

## NIETZSCHE

a story of failure. This is obviously true of tragedy, and the legends from which the great writers took their plots were themselves tragic in nature. Nor is the Epic exempt. The *Iliad* is the tale of the wrath of Achilles, with all its evil consequences. Nor is the final note one of triumph ; Troy is not yet taken. If we say to ourselves that in the end Troy did fall, the Greeks were victorious and Helen returned to her husband, we must admit that we find little of this in the poets themselves, and more of the horror of the sack, the wanderings of the dispersed fleet, and the woeful homecoming of the mighty Agamemnon. So deeply did the Greek feel the danger of existence and the liability to disaster, that to him hope was not a virtue, but a delusion, and almost a vice. Whatever encouraged a man to venture confidently forth into the world exposed him to the risk, almost to the certainty, of frustration, for the world was inherently unfriendly and the gods jealous.

Yet in spite of it all the Greeks give an appearance of serenity and happiness ; for their sensitivity to beauty compensated for their tenderness to pain. Culture alone — in the sense in which Nietzsche used the term at this stage — made life worth living ; and Greek culture stood so high and had such value that it justified all the misery, the sacrifice, injustice and oppression on which it was based.

Nietzsche recognised, of course, that his judgment of value, which he thought was that of the Greeks themselves, was not acceptable to all mankind, and that it only required to be clearly stated to provoke a protest. After turning aside to declare that in accordance with this doctrine, which he fully accepts, the toilsomeness of the life of the working class in his own time must be augmented “ to make the production of a world of art possible for a small number of Olympian beings ”,<sup>1</sup> he adds that therein lies the source of the inward rage which he supposes is cherished by the Communists, the Socialists and their paler recruits, “ the Liberals ”, against art and against classical antiquity. One passage may be quoted. “ If culture were really to lie in the choice of a

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iii, p. 281.

## GREEK CULTURE

people, if there were not an irresistible compelling force here, providing a law and a barrier to the individual, then the contempt for culture, the glorification of poverty of spirit, the iconoclastic destruction of the claims of art would be more than a revolt of the subjugated mass against drone-like individuals : it would be a cry of sympathy which might throw down the walls of culture : the impulse towards justice, towards equality of suffering, would drown all other ideas. In fact an exuberant degree of sympathy has sometimes here and there broken down the embankments of culture for a short time ; a rainbow of compassionate love and peace appeared with the first rising splendour of Christianity, and under it the finest fruit of Christianity, the Gospel of John, was brought forth. But there are also other examples, where powerful religions have petrified a definite level of culture for a long time, and with remorseless sickle cut off everything which strives strongly to grow further.”<sup>1</sup>

There is an inconsistency in Nietzsche’s doctrine here, but before we discuss it, we may glance briefly at one final aspect of his view of Greek society, viz. the position of women in it. In essence Nietzsche has not much new to say. His main point was made for him long ago by Thucydides in the Periclean funeral speech : “ Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character ; and greatest will be hers who is least spoken of among men whether for good or evil ”. This, like so much else of the kind, famous or otherwise, in its effort to be brief and striking, contradicts itself, but it represents the characteristic attitude of the dominant male, adopted by Pericles — if he did adopt it — from custom, and by Nietzsche from preference. Nietzsche, however, qualifies the stringency of his rule. The proper place for the woman in a well-organised society is in the background as a quiet, self-sacrificing comforter and helper to man : a hero-worshipper, perhaps, not unlike Cosima and Elizabeth ; and in the well-organised state the family itself is subordinated. But when the state is not well organised, when it is in its infancy or in its decay, the family unity becomes more

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 281 f.



## NIETZSCHE

important, and the woman is often the preserver and nourisher of such culture as is then possible. As a supreme example of this Nietzsche mentions the priestess of the Delphic oracle, whose influence, he imagined, moderated the conflicts of the Greek cities, and provided almost the only bond of unity which the Hellenic world possessed. The Greeks, Nietzsche believed, kept women in their place, yet where, he demands, can one find such ideal figures as the "Olympian women, together with Penelope, Antigone, Electra". It is a curious collection, and hardly a restful one. "The woman is to the state what sleep is to man",<sup>1</sup> says Nietzsche; and reading this, one thinks of those Olympian women, Hera, Artemis, Aphrodite, Athens herself, and, passing over the faithful, industrious and resourceful Penelope, glances doubtfully at Antigone and with greater incredulity at the tragic, vindictive Electra. One also notes the absence of Medea and her kind. "Of course", says Nietzsche, "these are ideal forms, but who could create such ideals from the modern world?" So sure was he, that he did not wait for an answer; nevertheless, had these ideal beings been realised, he might have found most of them rather uncomfortable household purveyors of rest and healing.

It has been suggested above that Nietzsche's general view of the Greek state, and indeed of society as a whole in its relation to culture, involves a contradiction. We must now consider this point more closely. We have already seen that Nietzsche's metaphysical theory contains two imperfectly reconciled tendencies; on the one hand, a glorification of power so that every form of activity by means of which Dionysus expresses himself alleviates the pain at the heart of things, and thus has value; and on the other, a tendency to regard artistic expression, the second appearance, as having such transcendent worth that in contrast with it everything else is worthless. Now another element is introduced, completely inconsistent with the former of these tendencies, and difficult to reconcile even with the second. This is the dogma that power in itself is "always evil". When, out

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iii, p. 296.

## GREEK CULTURE

of compassion for the suffering, the Church restrains the state from enslaving the workers, or limits the achievements of culture on the ground that its full ruthless development would press too hardly on humanity, the restraining force is itself also a force, and is therefore evil. Thus for Nietzsche power is good, and it is good from the Dionysian or ultimate point of view : but it is also evil. From what point of view is it evil ? And what is the relation of this point of view to the final one ?

To these questions Nietzsche gives no clear answer, and we shall have therefore to ask why he makes these apparently contradictory statements. He could, of course, have simplified his point of view, and if he had had a rigorously logical mind, he would have done so. Thus, for example, having identified the good with power, he might have denied all virtue to the powerless, thus justifying almost mechanically the course of life and history, whatever their outcome and content may be. The weak lose the battle of life ; they deserve to lose it ; and whatever conquers does so because it is the strongest and therefore the best. Thus he might have echoed Schopenhauer in speaking of the " eternal justice of the world " : " the world itself is the justice of the world. If we could lay all the misery of the world in one scale of the balance and all the guilt of the world in the other, the needle would certainly point to the centre." <sup>1</sup> Or again, identifying the good with beauty, and denying all virtue to that which is neither beautiful nor a creator of beauty, he might have regarded the enslavement of the worker as a merit rather than a defect. Dionysus, on this view, is the supreme and eternally successful artist : why then should we have tears for the fate of that which is worthless and which serves its function in suffering and being destroyed ?

Along either of these lines Nietzsche might have reached a logical and abstract optimism of the most uncompromising nature. But he did not do so. Slavery, he said, is necessary, but it is an evil. The ordinary man has no value, yet his suffering is an evil. The conqueror is the benefactor of mankind, yet his

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, Works, vol. i, § 63.

## NIETZSCHE

deeds are evil. Power is necessary, just, good, yet it is evil. Logically Nietzsche has already placed himself beyond good and evil in the ordinary moral sense, and denied any real justification to moral principles, to human judgments of right and wrong, yet these apparently superseded judgments are so firmly implanted in his mind that he cannot rid himself of them ; and in justifying the world, he dwells also on its lack of justice and its inhumanity.

Or again, Nietzsche might have reached logical coherence in another direction. Denying the self-justifying nature of power, or the absolute importance of satisfying the cravings of Dionysus, he might have regarded the world as a motley, careless of all judgments of right and wrong, as morally indifferent, and perhaps on the whole as something undesirable.

If he had taken any of these lines he would have been logically more intelligible, but also infinitely less important and interesting. For what speaks in him, and what he depicts by his vivid brush on the canvas of the world, is ultimately not something logical or metaphysical, compacted of premises and conclusions, but a human soul, in which the whole man, thought and passion, desire, achievement and failure, are all present in and through one another.

Burckhardt, of course, had something to do with Nietzsche's attitude. Exclusive, careful of his contacts with men, and largely self-sufficient in his great scholarship, Burckhardt shrank from violence in all its forms, and was able, by his sober delineation of the excesses and crudities of power, and by an indication of the bonds it has laid on freedom, to bring home to Nietzsche more fully the danger and horror of it. But however much Nietzsche and Burckhardt might agree for a moment in their " paradoxes ", they were temperamentally unlike, and Nietzsche had in him a strong assertive strain that Burckhardt lacked. Thus Nietzsche agreed with Burckhardt that power was evil, but unlike Burckhardt he was fascinated by it, and also regarded it as good. When he speaks of the power of the state holding the social classes in their proper positions and subordinating the common people, Nietzsche recognises that this power is in itself something quite

## GREEK CULTURE

other than the world of art or of artists, which it makes possible and protects, but as he considers it his enthusiasm for it grows. In the army with its pyramidal structure, he sees an image of the good society, with the broad base of obedient subjects, whose only virtue is their obedience and their subjection, and the apex of the commander in whom all the virtue and freedom and will is concentrated. So he begins to speak of the military genius, aligning him with the artist who is the true end and flower of society. To the conqueror also, to conquest, he ascribes a mystic potency by means of which political organisation springs forth almost of itself. The murders, the robberies and the destruction are soon forgotten, and the forces of society range themselves naturally in their due subordination round the usurping authority, whose sole justification is its strength. All this is very wrong, says Burckhardt ; yes, says Nietzsche, but how very splendid !

Nietzsche's account of Greek society is thus the outcome of his own temperament. By virtue of it he saw some things more clearly than other men did : other things he hardly saw at all. A few short examples are all that we have room for here. When he emphasised the strain of melancholy running through Greek literature as a persistent undercurrent, he ignored other equally vital aspects. The middle-aged political exile, Theognis of Megara, rid himself of some of his exasperation by a poetic over-statement of the misery and undesirability of existence, and Nietzsche hailed utterances of this kind as a revelation from the depths of the Greek mind. But Theognis did not take his own statement too seriously, and had no desire for an early release from the woes of life. " I rejoice ", he said, " to drink deeply and to sing to the pipes ; I rejoice to have in hand the tuneful lyre." And again, when the thought of death pressed on him, he shrank from it. " No mortal man, so soon as he is covered with earth and goeth down to the home of Persephone in Erebus, is rejoiced any more with the sound either of lyre or pipe, or with receiving the gifts of Dionysus. Beholding this I will make my heart merry while yet my limbs be light and I carry an unshaking head." This Nietzsche does not quote.

## NIETZSCHE

Again from Plutarch he takes the condemnation of labour as ignoble to which we have referred above ; but he ignores the equally apposite but contrary view of Hesiod, with which he must have been also familiar. " Work is the road to excellence : the way is long and steep, and at first is hard ; but it grows easier as you gain the summit." " There is no shame in labour ; idleness is shame."

Finally, when he praises the tragic period — the time which, in his view, ended with the fall of the tyrants at Athens — and condemns the democracy, he brings no evidence to show that even by his own standard, the production of art and the appreciation of it, the new age was intrinsically inferior to the old. His only reference is to tragedy and the development of the new comedy ; and however good a case he may have had, he does not present it objectively. Moreover, he overlooks one fundamental criticism. As Nietzsche saw, Greece never was united, and the failure to unite was notoriously one of the reasons for its collapse. But since the failure to unite was an essential part of Nietzsche's conception of the heroic age, he says nothing of its evil side. The point was clearly and briefly expressed a few years later by Nietzsche's younger contemporary and first critic, Ulrich v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff : " The Peloponnesian war is the last act in the century long struggle, which, almost always unknown to the combatants, was waged in order to blend the Hellenes and the invaders into a national unity. And when the effort failed, their political downfall was inevitable."<sup>1</sup> Of this Nietzsche says nothing.

Nietzsche's picture thus is obtained by selection, not by an intellectual compulsion arising from the facts themselves. His metaphysics and his history alike are merely vehicles of his aspirations and needs, not objective guides to his thought. The contradictions of his treatment ; his insistence of a ruthless ideal, and his lament over its ruthlessness ; his admiration of power and his horror of it ; his contention that good does not merely arise from evil, but incorporates it and is itself a form of evil ;

<sup>1</sup> U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Herakles Furians*, Einleitung, p. 261.

## GREEK CULTURE

these all express the divisions in his own being, which, torn inwardly, so that the parts limited and restrained one another, yet could not divide itself externally and even for a time give free unimpeded range to any of its elements and find full satisfaction for any of its needs. Behind the treatment of Greek antiquity, we see the same agonised soul which we have already encountered in the analysis of the Promethean myth, a soul which has all its conflicting aspirations unfulfilled and cannot give up any of them.

## XI

### REPERCUSSIONS

DURING the first three months of 1872, Nietzsche delivered five public lectures in Basle on *The Future of our Educational Institutions*. In the main they add little to his general philosophy and most of the contentions advanced are dealt with elsewhere, so that it is unnecessary to consider them in detail. Nevertheless there are a few points which deserve to be mentioned.

The first interesting thing about them is their style. Nietzsche was experimenting. In *The Birth of Tragedy* he had adopted the most prophetic, oracular and impressive mode of expression which he could command. Now he abandons this for a more conversational tone, casting his argument into the form of a Platonic dialogue, with an unnamed old philosopher, easily recognised as Schopenhauer, in place of the Platonic Socrates. This philosopher is accompanied by a neophyte, in part a replica of Nietzsche himself, and these two men encounter on the top of a lonely hill at Rolandseck on the Rhine above Bonn, two young men, one of whom is Nietzsche himself, the other, unnamed and rather a lay figure, being a blend of Rohde, Deussen, Krug and Pinder. The two young men have come to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of a society, also unnamed, but transparently a glorified edition of *Germania*; whereas Schopenhauer and his companion have arrived at the same romantic spot to meet a friend, who is said to be also an eminent philosopher. This friend, however, does not appear, and the main part of the story consists of a long discussion between Schopenhauer and his disciple, to which Nietzsche and his companion act as eavesdroppers from a neighbouring bench. There are various stage accessories to provide a setting; such as pistol-shooting at the beginning on the part of the two young men, and a vague noise

## REPERCUSSIONS

of revelling by students on the Rhine towards the end.

Nietzsche has introduced himself abundantly into the little play. The old philosopher, although clearly Schopenhauer, is only allowed to say things of which Nietzsche approved; the unnamed disciple, as has already been said, is also Nietzsche, and in addition Nietzsche is present under his own name. The story of *Germania* is altered. The society is moved from the Saale to the Rhine, and increased in size, while all the benefit which it conferred on Nietzsche and the extent to which it contributed to his development are emphasised.

Unfortunately Nietzsche was not a Plato. The stage machinery creaks, and much of it serves no useful purpose. Schopenhauer is drawn so far in character as to show a touch of irascibility, but this is doubtful gain in a discussion of schools and Universities. Why did Nietzsche adopt this cumbersome and distinctly unnatural procedure?

The reason is probably complex. The blend of prophetic and oracular styles which he had employed in his book has only a limited usefulness. Only a devoted adherent can endure it for long, and it is apt to be unintelligible to a listener who does not have a prepared key to the riddle. And Nietzsche wanted to be understood.

Yet, on the other hand, he wished to speak with authority. A relatively young man, he intended to tell the vast majority of school and University teachers that they were incompetent and uncultured, and in his own person he might not be sufficiently impressive to do so with success. Hence he borrowed Schopenhauer's mantle.

Then again, the story which he proposed to tell was incomplete, and in many ways only the externals were to be given. Greek culture was to be held up to the audience as the perfect model, but Nietzsche was not ready to tell the whole story of it, as he saw it. Some of it he had published, but the rest, for example the emphasis laid on the underlying cruelty and strife, might well alienate the listeners, unless they were sadistically inclined, and make them doubt the value of the culture which



## NIETZSCHE

was held up for their admiration. And so the more traditional ideal, the serene, beautiful, aristocratic Greek, was allowed to remain with his traditional glamour on him, and was not revealed in his nakedness. But under the circumstances, perhaps it was better for Nietzsche not to speak in his own person, but to use as a mouthpiece one who might be expected to go no further than Nietzsche intended to go in public at the moment.

Be this as it may, the experiment was not a success. Nietzsche was no dramatist, and his dialogue is little more than a set of overlapping monologues. He could really only talk to himself, and would listen only to himself. And so in his later published writings there were no more would-be Platonic characterisations ; at most only a wanderer communing with his shadow.

The lectures themselves, however, were a great success. Basle crowded to hear them, the audience including some of the University staff, the more serious students, and the cultured public of the town. After the first lecture Nietzsche told Rohde that he had produced a "sensation", and here and there "enthusiasm",<sup>1</sup> After a complimentary beginning, which encouraged the audience to think it might well be among the elect, the narrow exclusive ideal of culture with which we are now familiar was held up for admiration. The arts which conduce to life or to mere convenience and comfort, were sharply marked off from genuine art, and training in them was declared to have no contact with culture. The small number of the elect was announced, and the wickedness of the Socratic, optimistic and scientific revolution denounced. Existing schools and Universities were roundly condemned, and the popular extension of education was treated as a great error. The control of the Universities by the government was denounced, especially in Prussia, and the subservience of education to state purposes was regarded as a prostitution of it.

All this Nietzsche had said before, in private at least, but in addition we find two points that are new, or at least relatively so. They are interconnected, but may be mentioned separately.

<sup>1</sup> 28th Jan. 1872.

## REPERCUSSIONS

In the first place, Nietzsche emphasises the importance of the proper teaching of language. The "scientific" or "objective" treatment of language, where it is regarded as a subject to be discussed in its own right, is a mistake. The real purpose of studying language is not to acquire knowledge about it, but to gain facility in the use of it as a delicate and keen instrument. In this respect an adequate training in one's own language is a necessary prerequisite for the training in the ancient Greek language, by means of which alone a true appreciation of the classics is made possible. On this point Nietzsche puts many wise contentions into the mouth of Schopenhauer ; appropriately enough, for Schopenhauer had not only written on the subject, with much criticism of the academic teachers, but had also himself more sense of style than any other German philosopher of standing.

In the second place, and as an extension of this argument, there can be noted throughout the lectures a persistent subordination of science, history and objectivity, taken in their own right and for their own sake, to personal and active ends. Those who seek to subdue nature to themselves, who study things objectively and discover scientific laws, are no doubt useful members of society and have a place in it ; but their place is a humble and subservient one, and they, like the tools and technical devices they produce, are merely means to an end. Culture, on the other hand, requires a different point of view. The man of culture must get into naïve, confident, immediate personal relationship to nature, feel his affinity with the real unity behind all phenomena, and find tranquillity in the "eternal endurance and necessity" of nature. A modern scientific training would interrupt and destroy this attitude of mind, and what is thus destroyed, says Nietzsche, is no mere poetical fancy, but the instinctive, natural and true point of view.

Both of these considerations are consistent with the general conception which Nietzsche still held, that the artist is the end and purpose of creation ; but there is a slight shift of emphasis. Stress now begins to fall on personality rather than on art products, and the way is being prepared, if ever so slightly, for the

## NIETZSCHE

transition from the great artist to the great man of any kind. Burckhardt may have contributed to this result, for he had lectured on historical greatness, and Nietzsche had not only heard the lectures, but had also discussed the topics with him. But Nietzsche's fuller development lay in the future.

There is a final point to be mentioned in connection with these lectures. An underlying German patriotism is blatantly manifested. The Prussian state, indeed, is feared and condemned, but the good ancient German spirit, shown in the great German writers and in the great German reformation, still arouses Nietzsche's enthusiasm and hope. Here, as in *The Birth of Tragedy*, it provides a soil from which a new growth of the "tragic culture" may be expected to arise.

The conclusion of these lectures marks the climax of Nietzsche's happiness and fame as a professor in Basle. His refusal of the overtures made from Greifswald, already mentioned, had become known, the University authorities had raised his salary, the students had offered him the tribute of a torchlight procession, the two colleagues in whom he placed most trust, Burckhardt and Overbeck, were loud in his praise and he had achieved a notable success with the local cultured public. His book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, had been published for some months, and it had found favour with his friends, Wagner, Cosima, Cosima's discarded husband, Hans von Bülow, Rohde, Gersdorff, Burckhardt, Overbeck. But the philological world had been silent, ominously so, Nietzsche thought, and he waited anxiously for the first breath of air which might show how the wind would blow. At length it came: a pamphlet of some 32 pages, entitled *Philology of the Future, a Reply to Friedrich Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy*, by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Mocellendorff.

Wilamowitz, who in due course became one of Germany's greatest classical scholars, was at this time a young man not yet twenty-four years of age. He too had been a pupil of Schulpforta, and had recently taken his degree at the University of Berlin. Temperamentally definite and sure of himself, he had not found the classical world of his time the desolate wilderness

## REPERCUSSIONS

which Nietzsche described, and he treasured as a precious heritage the understanding of it which he had been taught, and which he himself in later life did much to promote. Nietzsche's book challenged all that he held sacred, and drew from him an indignant and bitter protest.

It is sometimes said that Nietzsche was a profound psychologist — a view which he himself shared. How far the statement is true with reference to a theoretic outlook we shall consider later, but it may be observed now that in a practical regard Nietzsche's understanding of the reaction of other people's minds was poor. This point also will be elaborated later, but we may note his *naïveté* in the present situation. For example, and this is only one instance of a very general tendency, in criticism of those writers on music who did not appreciate Wagner as he would have them do, Nietzsche asked rhetorically "whether they really bear the stamp of nature's darling children . . . or whether they are not rather seeking a deceptive cloak for their uncouthness, an aesthetic pretext for their own passive insipidity : I am thinking here, for instance," he does not scruple to add, " of Otto Jahn ". And then he commenced his next paragraph : " But let the liar and the hypocrite beware of our German music ".<sup>1</sup> And having said this about a teacher, who had been a friend, he did not dream that he had done anything to provoke a retort on his own person, nor did he expect to be told, as Wilamowitz told him, that " the dirt which is thus thrown at the sun falls back on the head of the thrower ". In matters like this he simply did not understand any point of view other than his own, and it surprised him to find that sweeping and scathing criticism of what other people held dear, even although not enlivened by personalities, was apt to bring a hostile reply. And so, after the initial shock was over, he attributed Wilamowitz's criticism to jealousy, believing or affecting to believe that the young man had been urged to the attack by the classical scholars of Berlin, who, envious of Ritschl, were thus assailing him in the person of his most brilliant pupil.

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iii, p. 134.

## NIETZSCHE

To Wilamowitz, however, the matter appeared otherwise. Here is his own statement. "To me the highest idea is the vigorous, rational development of the world according to law. With gratitude do I look up to the great minds, who, advancing step by step, have wrung its secrets from it; in admiration do I try to approach the light of the eternal beauty, which is radiated by art, by every appearance in its own way; and in the science, which fills up my life, I strive to follow the traces of it which my judgment yields to me, as I have devoted myself freely. And here", he said, with reference to Nietzsche's book, "I saw the development of a thousand years disavowed, here the revelations of philosophy and religion were abolished in order that a washed-out scepticism might make its bitter-sweet grimace in the wilderness, here the images of the gods with which poetry and sculpture had peopled our skies, were shattered to pieces in order that the idol, Richard Wagner, might be worshipped in their dust; here what was built up by a thousand busy, shining geniuses was destroyed that a drunken dreamer might cast a strange glance into the Dionysian abyss. This", added Wilamowitz, "I did not tolerate."<sup>1</sup>

To begin with, Wilamowitz attacked the general tone and bias of Nietzsche's book. Some of the language — he quoted a striking passage from the 20th paragraph — seemed to him exuberant nonsense. Unlike Nietzsche, he preferred to be a "Socratic man", theoretic, critical, optimistic, non-mystic; and he pointed out that Nietzsche, proceeding by intuition, threw aside all pretence of scientific method. In particular, Wilamowitz alleged, his method was unhistorical. Starting with a view of art and music privately gained, although stamped with Wagner's approval, Nietzsche went back to Greek antiquity, determined to find his own views there; and then, recognising the arbitrariness of his proceeding, attempted to forestall criticism by an attack on the scientific, historical and critical method itself.

Wilamowitz then proceeded to detail. Nietzsche, he maintained, showed no signs of acquaintance with some of the pioneers

<sup>1</sup> *Zukunftsphilologie*, Zweites Stück, p. 23.

## REPERCUSSIONS

of modern classical study, Gottfried Herman and Karl Lachmann, and his references to Winckelmann make it plain that either he has not read him or he has not been able to understand him. Winckelmann, Wilamowitz pointed out, recognised two forms of beauty in Greece, one of which flourished in the so-called Socratic time : Nietzsche apparently was ignorant of this. Again Nietzsche is charged with confusing Pan, Silenus and the satyrs, with disregarding dates and attributing recklessly material from post-Homeric writings to pre-Homeric times. And after quoting a comprehensive sentence from Nietzsche into which Moira, Prometheus, the curse of the Atrides, the Gorgons, Pan and the Etruscans all enter, Wilamowitz exclaimed : "What a nest of imbecility ! What a scandal, Mr. Nietzsche, do you bring on mother Pforta."<sup>1</sup> The treatment of Homer and Archilochus was also censured, and Nietzsche was told that if he had done his work properly as a *secundaner* at school, that is, in the class below the highest, he would have avoided some of these mistakes.

Nor, of course, did the main thesis escape. The statement that the song, the lyric, arose from music, was declared to be false ; for notoriously the oldest form of Greek lyric, the elegy, was not sung. Moreover, the element in Dionysus to which Nietzsche specially appealed, was held by Wilamowitz to be radically unhellenic, an uneasy importation from Asia Minor.

Further, the charge which Nietzsche brought against Euripides of destroying the tragic myth under the influence of Socrates conflicts with the known dates of the men's lives, and is based only on trivial gossip. Moreover, said Wilamowitz, although Euripides kept his own counsel regarding his philosophy, some of his most striking utterances are directly at variance with the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge.

Then, after pursuing Nietzsche for some space further, Wilamowitz concluded with another reference to the flamboyant 20th paragraph : "Let Mr. Nietzsche keep his word, let him grasp the thyrsus, and march from India to Greece, but let him come down from his chair where he is supposed to teach scientific-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

## NIETZSCHE

ally, let him gather to his knees the tiger and the panther, but not the philological youth of Germany”.

The pamphlet appeared at the beginning of June 1872. Rohde had written an enthusiastic popular notice of *The Birth of Tragedy* in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, and Nietzsche, thanking him effusively for it, ended by saying : “ I am melting away. Combat, combat, combat, I need war”.<sup>1</sup> He got it. Wilamowitz’s criticism came to hand immediately after this letter was written — to the consternation of Nietzsche and his friends.

In this crisis, for to Nietzsche it was a crisis, Rohde wrote promptly : “ Of course you have already seen the pamphlet. In any case, you will hold it beneath your dignity to answer it.”<sup>2</sup> And this was the line taken. Nevertheless, Nietzsche was extremely anxious that it should be answered. Wagner was first in the field; not unnaturally, for part of the offence of Nietzsche’s book lay in the exalted claims it made by implication for Wagner, whose music had been entitled by its friends, somewhat arrogantly, *Zukunftsmusik*, the music of the future, and Wilamowitz had scored a palpable hit by dubbing Nietzsche’s treatise *Zukunftsphilologie*, the philology of the future.

Wagner’s reply, cast in the form of an open letter to Nietzsche, appeared in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* about the middle of June. Wagner did his best. He told how his own interest in the Classics had been killed by bad teaching and suggested that the whole study of the subject required to be vivified in the manner which Nietzsche begun to put into practice; but Wagner could not meet the main points of the criticism, and his mild display of classical learning aroused nothing but scornful laughter. Something else had to be done, and Rohde willingly stepped into the breach. A reply was published from his pen, controverting Wilamowitz from a more scholarly point of view, and maintaining Nietzsche’s scientific accuracy. After some consultation with Nietzsche and Overbeck, it was entitled *Afterphilologie* — Superstitious Philology — a somewhat clumsy

<sup>1</sup> 27th May 1872.

<sup>2</sup> 5th June 1872.

## REPERCUSSIONS

parody of Wilamowitz's title. Rohde's pamphlet, which appeared in October 1872, took the form of an open letter to Wagner. Throughout its 48 pages it counter-attacked vigorously, accusing Wilamowitz, as he himself put it, of "boundless stupidity and boundless untruthfulness". He was charged with misrepresenting Nietzsche, with failing to understand his main argument, with lack of classical knowledge, and in general with disrespectful treatment of his betters. Nietzsche showed considerable anxiety that his scientific reputation should be rehabilitated, and supplied Rohde, as far as he could, with references to rebut the criticisms. In the end he was delighted with the result. Here is his comment : "Romundt and Overbeck, to whom alone I have read it as yet, are beside themselves with joy at your happy success. They do not tire of holding it up for praise in detail and as a whole, they call the polemic 'Lessing-like'—now, you know what good Germans mean by this epithet. What pleases me above all is the deep, steadily sounding keynote, as in a great waterfall, by which alone any polemic gets inspiration and makes the impression of greatness, that keynote in which love, confidence, courage, strength, pain, victory and hope all sound together. Dear friend, I was quite overcome—and when you spoke of 'friends', for a long time I could read no further."<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the next year, Wilamowitz, who was on holiday in Italy, replied to Rohde. After a brief, scornful reference to Wagner's effort, he dealt with a number of Rohde's criticisms, maintaining that at heart Rohde had been forced to admit the points made, and that he did not really accept Nietzsche's interpretations. The pamphlet, he thought, was a magnificent tribute to Rohde's power of friendship, to which he was willing to sacrifice his intellect and his own beliefs.

Here the conflict ended. Nietzsche's friends held that they had won a magnificent victory, but the philological world as a whole took the view of Wilamowitz. Nietzsche completely lost caste as a philologist, and classical students for a time avoided the University of Basel. At the beginning of the next session—

<sup>1</sup> 25th Oct. 1872.



## NIETZSCHE

October 1872 — Nietzsche's ordinary class disappeared. "In one special case", said Nietzsche to Rohde, "I even know that one student, who intended to study philology here, was kept back at Bonn, and wrote with gratitude to a relation, he thanked God that he was not at a University where I was a teacher."<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche said also that the numbers at the University had gone down about twenty, adding: "With great difficulty I have arranged a course of lectures on the Rhetoric of the Greeks, with two auditors, viz. a student of Germanics and a student of law".

In due season students returned, but never during the rest of his academic career did Nietzsche regain his reputation as a classical scholar. Wilamowitz's attack hit him hard, and he did not easily forget it. Even in the first part of *Thus spake Zarathustra*, written in 1883, there is a reference which shows how deeply the iron had entered into his soul.

"As I lay asleep, a sheep ate at the ivy-wreath on my head,—ate, and as it did so said, 'Zarathustra is no longer a scholar.'

Said this and went stiffly and proudly away. . . .

A scholar am I still to the children, and even to the thistles and the red poppies. Innocent are they even in their wickedness.

But to the sheep I am no longer one; thus my fate wills it — blessed may it be."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nov. 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Works, vol. xiii, p. 163.

## XII

### PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

ALTHOUGH hurt by the unfavourable reception of his book in academic circles, Nietzsche was not deterred from further work. During the winter of 1869-70, and again in the summer of 1872, he had lectured to his University class on the pre-Platonic philosophers. In the winter of 1872 he began to write the lectures up for publication ; and although, for two reasons to be considered later, the book was not finished, two prefaces for it were written, one probably in 1874, the other late in 1879. These prefaces give the point of view and method of approach which Nietzsche intended to adopt, and we may begin with them.

" Philosophical systems are wholly true ", wrote Nietzsche in 1874, " only for their founders : for all later philosophers they are usually one vast error, for weaker minds they are a blend of truth and error, but in any case as a highest end they are an error, and are therefore to be rejected."<sup>1</sup> This is an uncompromising declaration, with serious consequences ; but it was made in order to allow Nietzsche to take up another point of view, from which the truth or falsity of any system could be left on one side as irrelevant. Philosophical views are the expressions of the minds of great men, and if we find pleasure in great men, we can find pleasure in their systems " even if they are wholly wrong ". But the condition of this interest is that we regard the systems not as forms of objective truth but as expressions of the personality of their makers. In any system, however false and transitory it is in itself, there is always something imperishable, a part of the philosopher's personality ; and however much doubt there may be about his doctrine, this point of personality " belongs to the

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iv, p. 151.

## NIETZSCHE

undeniable and indisputable aspect, which history has to preserve". The history of Greek philosophy, Nietzsche believes, should be written from this point of view ; " the task is to bring to light that which we must ever love and of which we cannot be robbed by any later knowledge : the great man ".

Nietzsche reaffirmed this point of view in 1879. Ordinary accounts of ancient philosophy, with their apparatus of scholarship, and their indiscriminating interest in all that the thinkers ever said, are utterly tedious ; neglecting the personal element, they study the systems in and for themselves, and in consequence are prolix and overladen. To all this Nietzsche's own treatment is to be a contrast. " Out of three anecdotes", he says, " it is possible to make the picture of a man ; I am trying to extract three anecdotes from each system, and I discard the rest."

In June 1872, when he was beginning the revision, Nietzsche took the same point of view. " These great beings", he told Rohde, " seem to me more living than ever, and only as something to deride can I read the long drawn-out reports of the worthy Zeller."<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche then submitted for Rohde's approval a brief statement of some of the main deviations which he proposed to make from the accepted treatment.

It is unnecessary here to consider the philosophic systems of these ancient thinkers, or to examine in detail the historical value of Nietzsche's rendering. In the light of later scholarship it may fairly be said, however, that he showed himself lacking in an historic sense. No doubt the situation called for drama, and Nietzsche had set himself a problem of extraordinary interest. Here is how he approaches it. High above the people around them, rising up into the upper air of reflective thought, there stand these giants of old, a small and lonely company. Nietzsche names them : Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Democritus and — he it noted — Socrates. Apart from one another, they commune across the desolate spaces between them, and hold high intercourse, " un-

<sup>1</sup> 11th June 1872.

## PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

disturbed by the mischievous swarm of dwarfs, which creeps about beneath them".<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche could not resist this sneer at the ordinary man, even though a Hellene ; but to some extent he makes amends for it. " Other peoples ", he remarks, " have saints, the Greeks have sages. It has rightly been said that a people is characterised not so much by its great men as by the way in which it recognises and honours them. In other ages "— and here Nietzsche glances homewards — " a philosopher is an accidental lonely wanderer in a hostile environment, either slinking by or forcing his way through with clenched fists. But with the Greeks a philosopher was no accident." He was in tune with his time, and what he expressed in his deepest thought was not merely a personal opinion, but the essence of the culture to which he belonged. These ancient sages, Nietzsche believed, displayed, both in their personality and in their teaching, the main features of the Greek genius, and from them we can learn more fully and more directly what the nature of Greece was than from Greek history itself, which, Nietzsche tells us, is a dimmer and more distorted copy of the same spirit. " If we understood the whole life of the Greek people aright, we should find reflected only the picture which shines more brightly in the highest geniuses ", that is to say, in the early philosophers.

This is a gallant conception, and to make these men speak again so that later ages might hear and understand them would be a noble achievement. But even if the idea as Nietzsche sets it forth is inherently just, there are great difficulties in the path of anyone who would attempt to realise it. For one thing there is so much that we do not know. Some of these sages wrote nothing and of the rest what has come down to us are mere broken fragments. For example, the man among them of whom most has been preserved is Empedocles. Of his main *Poem on Nature* we have some 350 verses, but we know that it consisted of 2000. Moreover, the traditions regarding the philosophers are defective, being tainted by later ideas, and much that is

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iv, p. 157.

## NIETZSCHE

recorded concerning their personalities or lives is little more than the irresponsible chatter of gaping or even spiteful gossips. With care, patience and insight, it is possible in large measure to get behind these barriers and to construct the thought of the past, and by the exercise of great intellectual flexibility, detachment and sympathy to see the world as it appeared to the thinkers of old. But this combination of sympathy, insight and learning is rare, and the danger confronting any imaginative and eager writer is that he may not re-create the old world, but merely depict one of his own devising. This danger, it must be confessed, Nietzsche did not altogether escape. Essentially undramatic in mind, he was unable thoroughly to escape from himself, and place himself single-mindedly at any point of view other than his own. Within himself, however, there were warring tendencies, which, with all their conflict, were forms of the one personality and had a common stamp upon them. These he could project and bring into some relation to one another, peopling the republic of the sages with varying embodiments of his own being, and depicting in his record of their high dispute the struggles within his own soul.

If we consider Nietzsche's work from this point of view, as indeed we must do, we need not judge too closely its objective historical merit, and may regard its licence and lack of critical patience as irrelevant. The failure of historical perspective, and the tendency to read the problems of Kantian thought into ancient times is not a defect, for we are not concerned with the pre-Socratics, but only with Nietzsche himself, and the only perspective we require is that within which he falls.

Nietzsche's book is incomplete. He intended to discuss as the main figures, first, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, in that order, and then Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Democritus. Thales, Anaximenes and Xenophanes were to be regarded as forerunners, and Zeno as a follower. "It is a fine scheme," he remarked to Rohde, "main figures, forerunners and followers."<sup>1</sup> But it was not carried out. After Anaxagoras the work stopped,

<sup>1</sup> 11th June 1872.

## PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

except for a few notes, and in addition to him an account is given only of Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides. Neither Thales nor Anaxagoras need concern us greatly here, and we may confine the little that requires to be said to the three other figures.

Philosophy for Nietzsche, at this stage of his career, is not a form of demonstrated science. Proof and inference may carry the mind far, but a point comes where they fail. Then the mind leaps, going in a bound beyond the evidence to a point of view from which everything is seen in a fresh, unified and personal way. Anaximander of Miletus saw the unceasing change of the world, the coming into being and the decaying of which the Universe is full, and his mind leapt to the conclusion that somewhere there must be an infinite storehouse from which the wastage could be repaired and into which that which is destroyed returns. From this storehouse — the infinite, as Anaximander calls it — “all things take their rise and into it they pass away again once more, as ordained; for they make reparation and satisfaction to one another for their injustice according to the appointed time”.<sup>1</sup> The language, as the ancient recorder himself remarks, is “somewhat poetical”, and the interpretations which have been put upon it are varied and controversial. Nietzsche’s rendering, however, is unambiguous and free from doubt. The picture which Anaximander is trying to draw, he thinks, is that which Schopenhauer presents when he describes the misery of the world and the futility of the finite will. After a tale of woe, in which the world is depicted as a hell where men are at once the tormented souls and the tormenting demons, Schopenhauer comments: “The right standard by which to judge each man is that he is a being who ought not to exist at all, but atones for his existence by many forms of suffering and by death. What is to be expected of such a one? For are we not all sinners condemned to death?”<sup>2</sup> Anaximander, according to Nietzsche, conceived the world on the same pattern. All that is, has sinned. Its sin

<sup>1</sup> Diels, *Fragmente d. Vorsokratiker*, vol. i, No. 9, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Parerga*, vol. ii, § 156 bis, note.

## NIETZSCHE

is its emergence from the eternal being, its very existence is its offence, and it atones for this by the misery of its life and by its final extinction. The Anaximander who is said to have reasoned and thought thus is plainly an incarnation of the early Nietzsche, still deeply under the influence of Schopenhauer, and to the Nietzsche of 1872 he might well seem a suitable first representative of philosophic thought. When Anaximander has ceased to speak, another character appears, Heraclitus of Ephesus, the so-called weeping philosopher, the utterer of dark sayings, the Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Anaximander had retreated from the world of change into a "metaphysical castle", an inexhaustible world of reality, the infinite. Heraclitus, looking at the same world of change, and faced by the same problem, chose another solution. For him, there is no other world, nothing beyond that which we may perceive, no realm of Being over against Becoming. The moving, changing world itself is the real, what exists is Becoming and not Being. The world of Becoming, however, is not a chaos but an order, and the things which seem fixed and permanent to our eyes are but the results of balanced and compensating processes. Opposite qualities are bound together, and out of their union there arises the changing world we see. Not peace, therefore, but strife is the father of things: change, tension and struggle are the secret of reality. "Out of the war of opposites all becoming arises: the definite qualities which appear to us enduring, express only the momentary preponderance of one of the fighters, but the war does not thus come to an end, the wrestling continues for ever. Everything occurs in accordance with this strife, and this very strife reveals eternal justice. It is a wonderful conception." Nietzsche continues, "drawn from the purest fountain of Hellenism, and it regards strife as the continuing dominion of a uniform rigid justice, bound by eternal laws. Only a Greek was in a position to light upon this idea as the basis of a cosmology; it is the good *Eris* of Hesiod transfigured as a world principle; it is the sense of rivalry felt by the individual Greek and the Greek state, transferred from the gymnasia and

## PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

palestrae, from artistic contests, from the wrestling of political parties and cities with one another, to something completely universal, so that the mechanism of the cosmos is turned by it. . . . The things themselves, in the fixity and persistence of which men and animals with their limited intelligence believe, have no existence of their own at all, they are the flashes and sparks struck by drawn swords, the gleaming of victory in the battle of the opposing qualities.”<sup>1</sup>

Heraclitus, however, has another doctrine. The ultimate substance of the world is a very pure and subtle matter which he calls fire, and it is this fire which undergoes all the transformations which make up the world we see. Thus in a sense there is for Heraclitus a one behind the many, being behind becoming, and if we please, we may call this being, this fire, divine, Zeus. Fire transforms itself and moves along an upward and a downward path, and in its opposite movements produces those tensions of which our world is the visible expression.

How is this transformation of fire into other forms to be understood? Or, to put the matter in a quasi-religious manner, what is the relation of Zeus to the world? The question, as Nietzsche frames it, and as he thinks of it, is in moral and not in physical terms. The answer already given, through Anaximander, is that existence itself is a crime. What does Heraclitus say? Heraclitus, Nietzsche assumes, did realise the force of the view taken by Anaximander. There is, indeed, little or nothing in the fragments to justify this assumption, but Nietzsche calls to his aid an old Greek proverb: “Satiety is the mother of crime (*Hybris*)”, the implication being that a motionless perfect being, out of pure boredom, would break forth into sinful existence. Taking this idea seriously, Nietzsche imagines he sees that “the face of Heraclitus changes, the proud look in his eyes is dulled, a wrinkled expression of painful resignation and feebleness displays itself, we seem to know why later antiquity called him the weeping philosopher”.<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche stresses this side of the picture. “That dangerous world, *Hybris*, is in fact the touchstone for every Heraclitean ;

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iv, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 182.



## NIETZSCHE

here we may show whether he has understood the master or not."<sup>1</sup> But Nietzsche immediately goes on to insist that this is only one aspect, the lower subordinate one, that of the ordinary man caught in the toils of existence and subject to becoming. To Zeus himself, the ever-living fire, existence is harmony, invisible indeed to most human eyes, but fully real to the god himself. "A becoming and decaying," says Nietzsche, "a building and destroying, with no moral imputation, in eternally equal innocence, belong in this world only to the play of the artist and the child. And as the child and artist play, so plays the ever-living fire, building and destroying, in innocence — and this game the aeon plays with itself."<sup>2</sup> Thus we come back, in one main essential, to the view set forth in *The Birth of Tragedy*; for what are Zeus, or the aeon, or the ever-living fire for Nietzsche, but names for Dionysus; and when Nietzsche sums up the philosophy of Heraclitus in these words, "What he perceives intuitively, the doctrine of law in becoming and of play in necessity, must be perceived from now on for ever", he further indicates his own approval by adding, "he has drawn up the curtain of this the greatest of all plays".<sup>3</sup>

After Heraclitus of Ephesus comes Parmenides of Ellea, another outstanding figure in the history of thought, teaching a doctrine which to modern eyes is one of the strangest the mind of man has conceived. According to his carefully considered and final view, what exists is a very large, completely homogeneous, motionless, unchanging sphere. There is nothing else. There is no empty space. There are no different qualities, no differences of density, nothing but this undifferentiated spherical plenum. All ideas to the contrary, whether they come from the senses or from the spurious thought of other philosophers, are false and are to be rejected.

<sup>1</sup> As an example of the freedom which Nietzsche allows himself in his historical reconstruction, it may be remarked that the word *Hybris* does not occur in the fragments of Heraclitus in this connection at all. It is found only once, viz. in the saying "It is more important to extinguish crime (*Hybris*) than a conflagration" (Diels, *Fragments der Vorsokratiker*, vol. i, Heraclitus, B 43).

<sup>2</sup> Works, vol. iv, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 188.

## PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

At this point, with the entrance of Parmenides, Nietzsche's drama begins to go astray. Heraclitus, with Nietzsche's full approval, has proclaimed the reality of becoming and denied reality to any form of pure static being : Parmenides rejects this, excludes all becoming and reinstates pure being. Moreover, in the subsequent history of philosophy, Parmenides proved of more importance than Heraclitus. All his successors tried to answer Parmenides, each in his own way, but in the very act of denying and refuting him each adopted some of his essential outlook. Perhaps the Atomists afford the best example of this. Parmenides said that empty space did not exist, that reality was indivisible and homogeneous. The atomists denied this as explicitly as they could, asserting, with the imperfect language at their command, that empty space was just as real as filled space ; but when they came to consider the nature of that which filled space, they found it to consist in an indefinitely large number of pieces of homogeneous matter, each undivided and indivisible, a minute copy of the Parmenidean universe.

Now all this was inconvenient to Nietzsche. If Heraclitus represented in primitive material guise the aspect of Schopenhauer's teaching which Nietzsche was attempting to erect into a complete philosophy, Parmenides was, as it were, a materialistic caricature of another aspect which Nietzsche was rejecting and superseding.<sup>1</sup> In reality, however, it was Parmenides who tended to supersede Heraclitus. For Nietzsche's purpose he ought to have come before Heraclitus and be refuted by him ; but he had the bad taste, or one might even say the effrontery, to come after Heraclitus and refute him. Nietzsche, whatever history might say, could not allow this to happen ; so he steps on to the stage himself, and having signified his approval of Heraclitus, proceeds to handle Parmenides roughly.

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche did not fully realise how primitive and materialistic the thought of these philosophers was. For example, he speaks of reality as Parmenides understands it as " bounded, complete, immovable, everywhere balanced, in every point equal like a ball, but not in a space ". It was a ball, as Nietzsche describes it, but a ball cannot exist except in space. Nietzsche had no warrant whatever for his modernising gloss.

## NIETZSCHE

By rejecting sense perception in favour of thought, Nietzsche declares, Parmenides "has destroyed the intellect itself, and incited people to that wholly erroneous separation of 'mind' and 'body', which specially since Plato, lies like a curse on philosophy".<sup>1</sup> This particular point of attack is perhaps not well chosen, but Nietzsche, with more reason, proceeds to allege that the Eleatic outlook leads to the neglect of the study of nature. "Truth is now to dwell only in the most faded, most abstract, generalities, in the empty husks of the most indefinite words, as in a shell of cobwebs: and beside the 'truth' of this kind there sits the philosopher, also as bloodless as an abstraction and spun round with formulae. The spider does indeed desire the blood of its victims, but it is precisely the blood of its victim that the Parmenidean philosopher hates, the blood of the empiricism sacrificed by him."

Nietzsche, however, does not demonstrate his criticisms historically. Instead of doing so he passes over Plato's excellent discussion and summons firstly Aristotle and then Kant to reprove the stern Eleatic. Existence and essence, Nietzsche says, relying on the authority of Aristotle, are different things, and thought cannot pass from the 'notion' of being to actual existence.<sup>2</sup> Then, after evoking Kant's help and urging against Parmenides the subjectivity of all thought, Nietzsche maintains that "it is completely impossible for the subject to want to see and know anything beyond himself, so impossible that knowing and being are the most contradictory of all spheres".<sup>3</sup> And as if this were not enough, he showers a powerful set of arguments *ad hominem* on the obstinate figure,<sup>4</sup> who, in spite of all criticism, insists on occupying the centre of the stage. If movement and sense perception are an illusion, where does the illusion come from? It is at least real, and "the non-existent cannot even deceive".

Here, perhaps, we may leave the argument, for the discussion

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. iv, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> This again, though correct in principle, is wrongly conceived by Nietzsche. The "notion of being" is an anachronism.

<sup>3</sup> Works, vol. iv, p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 206.

## PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

of Anaxagoras, as it stands, adds but little to the point, and the treatment of the Atomists, to whom Nietzsche, in spite of many of his other principles, has a strong inclination, was not properly begun. Democritus, the laughing philosopher, is in sharp contrast to Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides, but although Nietzsche had studied him for long and been attracted to him, his time had not yet come : he represented a side of Nietzsche's thought which had not yet reached maturity and independence.

One final point may be made with regard to Nietzsche's account of the pre-Socratic philosophers. Those whom he depicted differed widely from one another in their views and represented different aspects of his thought, but they had one characteristic in common, a remoteness from the common life, an austere loneliness, and a contempt for ordinary humanity, which bound them into a brotherhood. So Nietzsche interpreted them, stamping on them the seal of his own personality.

In one of Plato's dialogues the chief speaker, an Eleatic Stranger, begs that he may not be taken for a parricide, if, in defence of his position, he is forced to lay hands on his father Parmenides. Nietzsche might well have made the same request, for his own criticism of the great Eleatic is a thinly veiled attack on his philosophic father Schopenhauer ; and indeed the terms into which it is cast are more appropriate to the nineteenth century thinker than to the pre-Socratic. But Nietzsche does not strip off the veil, and the argument is not carried to its logical conclusion. In another short writing, however, belonging to the year 1873, he develops the sceptical aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy in a way which implicitly excludes the positive aspect, viz. the doctrine of the real will and of eternal being. Of course, he states the problem in his own terms, and although in principle he has little or nothing new to say, he impresses his own manner and cast of expression upon the argument.

The article is entitled *Concerning Truth and Lie in an Extra-moral Sense*. It begins with a vigorous attack on the objectivity and disinterestedness of the thinking individual. Thinking is a means to an end, and that end is the preservation of the individual

## NIETZSCHE

and his self-satisfaction — primarily the satisfaction of his vanity. But man is a feeble creature, and his chief means both of preserving his life and of satisfying his vanity is deceit. Deception, thus, flattery, falsehood, slander, pretentiousness, disguise, misrepresentation — all servants to human vanity — are so much the rule that Nietzsche asks whence an impulse to truth could arise. Unfortunately, the answer which he gives is not wholly free from ambiguity, and the final impression which his complex argument makes, and doubtless was intended to make, contains a marked sceptical element — that no truth is attainable at all.

Seeming truth, however, does arise from the agreement between men, who, putting an end to the crude *bellum omnium contra omnes*, and wishing not so much to attain truth as to avoid the ill consequences of being deceived, contract to use words in fixed and recognised ways. Those who offend against the standards thus set up are rejected as liars. The standards, however, are purely conventional, and do not correspond to anything known in real things. And having begun in this arbitrary way, man extends the scope of his language by using his words metaphorically beyond their original range. Language thus from beginning to end is metaphorical, for even the original giving of names and determining of meanings is metaphorical in Nietzsche's eyes, in that it is arbitrary and determines nothing in things themselves. Language does not tell what things are, but merely what we say about them.

But, it may be argued, although this may be true of ordinary speech and even more so of poetical language, surely it is unfair to science and to the scientific impulse ! Nietzsche recognises a difference between science and poetic thought, but he rejects the inference that scientific thought gets nearer to reality than ordinary language or poetry does. The whole structure of science, its vast conceptual system, obtains its force and rigidity and seeming objectivity from the laws and computations which space and time permit ; and space and time, Nietzsche argues, following Schopenhauer's version of Kant, are not features of things themselves but are brought by the mind to experience and

## PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

imposed upon objects. By no possibility can we go behind subjective experience itself and attain reality. Perceptions only give sense qualities — wholly subjective. When we say a stone is hard, we merely mean, or ought to mean, that it — whatever it may really be — gives a particular kind of sensation ; we say nothing and know nothing of hardness in the stone itself. Again, conceptions give only rules of our devising, so-called laws of nature, applying only to relations within experience and not at all to things in themselves, and saying nothing about the interconnection of things in reality.

“ What then is truth ? ” asks Nietzsche, and he answers : “ A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short a sum of human relations, which become poetically and rhetorically enhanced, changed, adorned, and which after long use seem to a people fixed, canonical and binding : truths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are illusions, worn-out metaphors powerless to affect the senses, coins which have lost their image and are now to be taken into account only as metal and not as coins.”<sup>1</sup>

This is Nietzsche's general position, and the distinction between the poet and the scientist falls within it. He admits the contrast between them, between what we may call the intuitive and the rational man. But he maintains that neither reaches anything beyond himself, or attains any ultimate reality. In certain respects, indeed, the intuitive man has the pre-eminence. The artist deceives himself, of course, and his intuitions are false, but the scientist also fails to reach reality, and his form of superiority, such as it is, also falls wholly within the realm of experience ; in his sober scientific activity he is occupied only with cobwebs of his own spinning. The intuitive man has the advantage that his attitude to life is more positive ; and whereas the rational man seeks prudence and safety, the intuitive man seeks joy and satisfaction. “ Both desire to rule over life : the one by an ability to meet the main needs of life through foresight, prudence, regularity, the other, as an overjoyous hero, by disregarding

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vi, p. 81.

## NIETZSCHE

these needs and by taking as real only life which has been disguised as appearance and beauty. Where primitive man, as in Greece in its earlier days, wields his weapons more powerfully and more victoriously than his opponent, in a favourable case, a culture may be formed, and art may establish its mastery over life."<sup>1</sup> The penalty of this glory, this splendour, this success, however, is that the intuitive man is more helpless in the face of misfortune than the rational man and suffers more acutely. "Indeed he suffers more often, because he does not learn from experience, and ever falls again into the same ditch into which he has once fallen. In suffering he is just as non-rational as in happiness, he cries aloud and finds no consolation." The rational man, on the other hand, is a Stoic ; but even into the description of his rationality, Nietzsche contrives to introduce a sting. "He who in other matters seeks only uprightness, truth, freedom from deception and protection from the snares of surprise, displays in his misfortune a masterpiece of dissimulation, as the other did in good fortune. He does not wear a trembling expressive human face, but, as it were, a mask with dignified regular features ; he does not cry out, and his voice never changes ; when a great thunder-cloud pours itself down upon him, he wraps himself in his robe and walks with slow steps away under it."

They are both cheats. Which does Nietzsche prefer ? Which is he ? He does not say.

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vi, p. 90 f.

### XIII

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

NIETZSCHE spent his Christmas holiday in 1872 at Naumburg, and while he was there he received an invitation to come to Bayreuth. He refused the invitation, and thereby gave offence to Wagner. The trouble did not last long, but Nietzsche was disturbed by it, and sought to make amends by spending his Easter vacation at Bayreuth, with Rohde as an additional companion. He went there in good spirits and high expectations, taking with him for exhibition and discussion the manuscript on the early Greek philosophers, on which he was then engaged. At Bayreuth, however, he found Wagner greatly concerned with the whole Bayreuth undertaking, which was not only suffering from the indifference of the public, but was also in grave financial straits. It was not a propitious time to discuss Heraclitus and Parmenides ; and Nietzsche felt frustrated, as his mind was full of these ancients, and he had hoped to publish soon after the vacation. Moreover, it seems as if the wound inflicted by the academic treatment of his first book was still rankling. At the end of January 1873 he expressed his desire to write something for the Wagnerian cause. " But ", he said " everything that I project is so wounding, so provocative, so very opposite in its effect to what is required ! " Then with a reference to *The Birth of Tragedy* he added, " How badly even my enthusiastic and good-humoured book was received ". This was all the more galling to him, as he had just announced to Rohde : " Thus in the summer Bayreuth Council ! We as the Bishops and Dignitaries of the new church."¹ As a further irritant he received word in February of Wilamowitz's reply to Rohde. He stated that he intended to refrain from reading it and advised Rohde to do the

¹ 31st Jan. 1873.



## NIETZSCHE

same : but when he got a copy towards the end of March he did read it, and professed to regard it as a surrender by Wilamowitz of his case.

Moreover, before the end of October of the previous year, Wagner had emphasised in a letter to Nietzsche the lack of contact between himself and the world in which he lived, and, characteristically assuming that it was the world which was at fault, advocated a warlike attitude to it. "The feeling is growing in my mind", he said, "that the only possible means a man has of distinguishing himself from the age in which he lives is to become thoroughly conscious of his own strength, and to do this, if need be, by engaging in pitched battle with the meanness and pettiness of the age. As far as I am concerned, I have arrived at the point where I do not intend to mince matters. . . . Something must come of all this, for one thing is certain ; compromise is not to be considered for a moment. Having got oneself cordially hated, the only thing to be done is to make oneself feared."<sup>1</sup>

A few weeks before Nietzsche went to Bayreuth, Cosima had drawn Nietzsche's attention to a new book by David Strauss, *The Old Faith and the New*, which in some three months had passed through as many editions. At Bayreuth Nietzsche found Wagner discussing it at length and denouncing it as a sign of the evil times.

Nietzsche returned from Bayreuth in great discouragement. "Do you know", he asked Rohde, "that our excessively festive parting-cup at Lichtenfels had made me intoxicated? The phenomenon which appeared was that I imagined I was being turned round in a great wheel ; so that I became giddy, fell asleep, waked at Bamberg, and had some coffee." Then he tells how a fit of depression came on him, recurring again and again. "I came back from Bayreuth", he stated earlier in the same letter, "in such a persistent melancholy, that in the end I could save myself nowhere else than in holy wrath."<sup>2</sup> In this mood and under these circumstances Nietzsche put the Greek philosophers aside and sat down to write a pamphlet entitled *Untimely Considerations*.

<sup>1</sup> *Wagner und Nietzsche*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> 5th May 1873.

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

*Part One : David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer.* At first the work went quickly, but soon Nietzsche's general health deteriorated, and then he was afflicted by severe eye trouble, which forced him to call von Gersdorff to his aid as an amanuensis. In July, however, the essay went to press and appeared in August 1873.

David Friedrich Strauss was brought up in the Christian faith, entered the Lutheran Church, and became a successful pastor. But as his thought developed, he became dissatisfied, resigned his charge, and devoted himself to study. At the age of twenty-seven he produced his *Life of Jesus*, a work which gave a new direction to critical thought and became a storm-centre of controversy. It brought him many opponents and much obloquy, but it also made his reputation as a scholar and gave him a widespread influence. After some years of discussion he abandoned theology for literature, but in 1862 he returned to it again, and in 1864 he published a new version, *A Life of Jesus for the German People*. Having been a destructive critic of the established religion, and having been in constant active conflict over matters of belief with the majority of religiously-minded people, Strauss nevertheless found that a considerable body of thoughtful men and women were in sympathy with him ; and towards the end of his life, in 1872 at the age of sixty-four, he thought it desirable to draw up a balance-sheet, and going beyond the narrow limits of merely theological discussion, to set forth the view of life which he and those who were in sympathy with him might reasonably adopt. It was his confession of faith. Accordingly he asked four questions : (1) Are we still Christians ? And to this he answered uncompromisingly, no. (2) Do we still have a religion ? To which he answered, yes. (3) How do we regard the world ? To which he replied in optimistic terms on the basis of the science of his day. (4) How do we order our lives ? To which he responded as a respectable cultured citizen with a conservative, patriotic, but not narrowly exclusive outlook. To the book he added two appendices ; one on the great poets of Germany, and the other on her musicians.

## NIETZSCHE

In spite of the negative elements in his outlook, Strauss took an optimistic view of life, and although he no longer believed in a personal God, or in the traditional Heaven, he did not think it incumbent on him to regard the present world as a hell. In this matter he was completely opposed to Schopenhauer, and attacked the latter with some vigour. The main point of his religious belief he expressed simply. "In the world of man, rationality and goodness proceed from consciousness and will, and from this the old religion inferred that whatever there is of a corresponding nature in the world at large must also proceed from a conscious and willing originator. We have given up this mode of thought, we regard the world no longer as the work of an absolutely rational and good personality, but as the workshop of the rational and the good. It is no longer designed for us by a highest reason, but it is designed for the highest reason. And of course, what lies in the effect must also lie in the cause ; what comes out must also have been in."<sup>1</sup> The world is rational for Strauss in the sense that all its activities are governed by law, and it is good in the sense that goodness springs up in the hearts of men within it and that it provides them with the conditions of a good life. Schopenhauer's pessimism seemed to him a slander on the nature of things, offending his intellect as absurd, and his feelings as blasphemous.

Naturally this infuriated Nietzsche, and what made matters worse was that Strauss's taste in music did not go so far as to appreciate Wagner. He did not like programme music, even in Beethoven, and did not hesitate to say so. He did not even mention Wagner.

It is unnecessary to analyse in any detail Nietzsche's attack on this old man, from whom he had at one time learned so much and of whom he had expressed a high opinion. It is one long scream of rage, the echoes of which have died away long ago. Only a few points need be considered. Nietzsche begins with an attack on the German culture of which Strauss seems to him a typical representative. He declares that it is a hollow sham in

<sup>1</sup> D. F. Strauss, *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, § 44.

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

that it does not possess the unity of style and feeling which a true culture must have. Faced with the fact that members of the existing educated class of his time and country did speak a common intellectual language and have a common outlook on life, Nietzsche retorted by calling them Philistines of culture, banded together to exclude those who ought to possess the land. Then passing to Strauss, he attacks him as a thinker, a critic, a literary man, as an admirer of art and music. He jeers at his literary style, accusing him of coarseness and lack of taste, and declaring him so incompetent that he has no right to express an opinion, even in approval. Mocking at his beliefs, Nietzsche denounces him as a coward for retaining the old ethical point of view which has sympathy for the fallen and a fellow-feeling for the weak, declaring that if Strauss had been a man at all, he would have cast aside all these worn-out sentimentalities, and "established a moral code for life out of *bellum omnium contra omnes* and the privileges of the strong".<sup>1</sup>

The details need not concern us. It is sufficient to say that none of Strauss's views are fairly set forth, that his words are frequently twisted to give them a ridiculous or mean appearance, and that an attempt is even made to stir up the *odium theologicum* against him. The general impression which Nietzsche tries to convey by every means at his command is that Strauss is a person of no account who is disgracefully pleased with life, and who has no right to have a following or to have written such a successful book.

Nietzsche's assault on Strauss attracted considerable attention and called forth a number of replies. Strauss himself was surprised to be assailed in such a personal fashion by a total stranger, and, not knowing the sickness in Nietzsche's soul, could not understand why such venom was introduced into the discussion of a difference of philosophic outlook. But Nietzsche was delighted with the result. He had made himself felt, and, he thought, if he was not respected he was at least feared. From now on, right throughout his active life until his reason finally

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vi, p. 169 f.

## NIETZSCHE

collapsed, he prided himself on his warlike qualities, the dexterity of his swordsmanship, and his ruthlessness.

But did he not deceive himself? Or at least attempt to do so? Did he not fear that he failed completely to be a man of action? Earlier in *The Birth of Tragedy* he had sought relief from an overwhelming burden of self-consciousness. But unfortunately self-consciousness did not vanish and the burden remained unlightened. Now he had gained some relief in another direction; having failed to build up, he had attempted to pull down, and surely even destruction is a form of action? In one sense it is, but not in the sense Nietzsche required; at most it is an unmaking and not a making. If it is successful, it may remove a discord, but it does not produce a harmony. And if it is not successful, it may but add one more jarring note to the unresolved whole. And such indeed, Nietzsche feared, was the case. He had annoyed his enemies, or at least those whom he thought should be his enemies, but he had not converted them; they had been stung and scratched, but they gave no sign of realising that they were mortally wounded. Was it possible after all that he was not a man of action but only an expert in vituperation?

Partly to remove this fear, partly to continue the attack and make it more effective, and at the same time to give a more positive and constructive side to it, Nietzsche wrote the second of his *Untimely Considerations: Concerning the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*. It progressed rapidly, went to press in January, and appeared in February 1874.

Here the feud with the age is continued, and the same strained, personal note of anger shows itself at times in the criticism of opponents. Hegel naturally is abused — one expects that: but even greater exasperation comes upon Nietzsche when he discusses his contemporary von Hartmann, and at the expense of interrupting his argument, he has to shout at him, “rogue”, “scoundrel”, “scoundrel of scoundrels”. There is a feeling of impotence at the back of the violence, perhaps a fear that von Hartmann too will not realise that he is being slain. But in this second “untimely” essay, such a tone is the exception and not

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

the rule, and the bulk of it is free from personalities. Naturally the age is not spared, and the recognised teachers of it are treated as inadequate and uncultured. But general statements of this kind were fast becoming a commonplace with Nietzsche and involved no new or special warmth. It is true that the degeneration which Nietzsche ascribed to his age seemed to him now to be due to false teaching, particularly to a false conception of history ; but in his condemnation of this perversion he seems prone to lay the blame not so much on the teachers personally as on the system of which they are victims. Perhaps as a consequence of this, the general tone is quieter, the argument more solid, and the content more valuable than anything in the previous essay. There are passages which come from the heart and not merely from the spleen, and under the mask of the ruthless, single-minded warrior, one gets a glimpse, indeed more than a glimpse, of the unhappy, lonely, divided nature that seeks a peace it cannot find.

Nietzsche himself gives warrant for this view. In his preface, after speaking of his dissatisfaction with the relation of history to life and to culture generally, he adds : " Also, to relieve my mind, I must not hide that I have taken the experiences which excited those tormenting feelings mostly from within myself, and have only taken them from others for comparison ". Then he continues : " It is only in so far as I am a pupil of ancient times, chiefly the Greek, that I, as a child of the present age, have gone beyond myself to such untimely experiences ".<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the history with which he is primarily concerned is that of Greek culture, and the life to which it has to be related is his own life. The statement is not complete, for more than Greek culture enters into the situation, but the general point is clear.

For a little at the beginning of his essay, overwhelmed by the weight of his self-consciousness, Nietzsche turns with envy to the cattle in the fields, free from care, melancholy, satiety, and the torture of thought. They live in the moment, unhistorically, content ; and now and again this ideal of the completely

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 231.

## NIETZSCHE

unhistorical, the life blind to before and after, the mere animal, recurs in the essay. But Nietzsche knew that it was a false and impossible ideal for man, and its appearance in his pages is merely a sign that he has found no final solution of his problem : the need for history is clear and decided, man cannot divest himself of it, even for the sake of animal-like placidity, without also renouncing his humanity. "History," it has been said, "as it lies at the root of all science, is also the first distinct product of a man's spiritual nature ; his earliest experience of what can be called Thought. It is a looking both before and after ; as, indeed, the coming Time already waits, unseen, yet definitely shaped, predetermined and inevitable, in the Time come ; and only by the combination of both is the meaning of either completed." History, the writer goes on to say, has been written in many ways and by many kinds of men, for "everyone lives between two eternities, and, warring against Oblivion, he would fain unite himself in clear conscious relation, as in dim unconscious relation, he is already united, with the whole Future and the whole Past". The quality of human action, we may say, is that it comes out of a past and goes into a future, uniting them into one ; history, therefore, is indispensable to it, whether as the clear conscious relation or as the dim unconscious relation, already referred to.

Nietzsche realises these points and expresses them in his own way, but he lays emphasis on the possible, and as he thinks actual, failure of this continuity ; a failure in which the past does not, in full self-consciousness, meet and genuinely unite with the future, but is merely carried over into it, untransformed and alien, not only lifeless, but also life-destroying.

According to Nietzsche there are three kinds of history, monumental, antiquarian and critical, each with its advantages and disadvantages for life. Monumental history is the history of great men, of those heroes who rose above their fellows in achievement, and who, when lesser men have sunk into the obscurity of time, still stand up above the mist and are visible to later ages. Monumental history serves to quicken and inspire

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

the soul : great men, it tells us, have existed, and we believe that they may exist again. It gives us examples, encouragement, hope : perhaps we too may yet do great things.

But by itself it is not enough. For one thing, it has a message only for the greater souls, for those of to-day who may themselves aspire to be great ; and for another, the assurance it gives is not fully convincing. Conditions have changed since these men lived ; is the greatness which they reached under the conditions of their time still possible to-day ? History cannot tell us. And so we may seek help from it in another way, namely, through the spirit of reverence which lies behind antiquarian history. In his account of this form, Nietzsche displays a warmth and sympathy not always characteristic of him. He desired to be great, and he extolled the heroes of Greece as a model and inspiration for all men of culture. But much as he would be a great man, even more did he feel that he was a weak one, a feeble modern individual, remote from these ancient giants, an insignificant figure in the vastness of life. To such a man antiquarian history brings consolation, enriching his individuality, extending his horizons, and filling his emptiness with the wealth of the past. " The history of the town ", says Nietzsche, " becomes for him his own history ; he sees the wall, the turreted gate, the city ordinances, the popular festivals as an illuminated diary of his youth, and finds himself in it all, his strength, his diligence, his pleasure, his judgment, his folly, his naughtiness. Here we can live, he says to himself, for men have lived here ; and here we will be able to go on living, for we are tough and are not to be uprooted overnight. And with this ' we ' he looks away out over the wonderful individual life of the past and feels that he himself is the spirit of the house, the race and the city."<sup>1</sup>

" But ", he says a little later, " that antiquarian history, with its sense of reverence, has its highest value when it spreads a simple, peaceful feeling of pleasure and contentment over the restricted, crude and even miserable conditions under which a man or a people may live : thus, for example, Niebuhr acknow-

<sup>1</sup> *Loc cit.* p. 251.



## NIETZSCHE

ledges with real sincerity that he could live contentedly on moor and heath among free peasants who had a history, and not regret the lack of art. How could history serve life better ", Nietzsche goes on, " than by binding the less favoured races to their home and ancestral customs, keeping them settled, and preventing them from roaming in strange lands, seeking something better, and fighting for it with eager competition." <sup>1</sup> Is it only of less favoured peoples and peasants that Nietzsche is thinking here? The old home life, the pious Christian life of the old Saxon stock from which he has come, is before his mind; and although he has left the land and the faith of his fathers, he feels that he is still one with them, that the substance of his life is drawn from them, and that in them there is a strength he needs.

But he cannot go back. He could not go back to Greece, whose great snow-clad peaks are unapproachable; nor can he go back to the homely picties which he has abandoned. Both these forms of history, the monumental and the antiquarian, fail him; hence there must be a third form to justify his refusal and failure to return, a critical history which frees him from the past. In explanation of his position, and really in self-defence, Nietzsche insists that the antiquarian attitude to history produces an indiscriminating reverence for all that is old, for antiquity as such, and this tendency not only hinders progress but may even become inimical to life. History must therefore be free not only to examine the past but also, if need arise, to annul and dissolve it. And indeed, Nietzsche says, when history undertakes this task, it finds enormous scope for its activity, for in the end " everything that exists, deserves to be destroyed. Hence it would be better if nothing came into being." <sup>2</sup> Thus it matters little what historical phenomenon we consider; if we look into its origin we see " how unjust the existence of anything at all is, for example, of a privilege, caste, a dynasty, how greatly it deserves to perish ". And yet, argues Nietzsche, we cannot abandon ourselves fully to this critical destroying attitude; " for, being the result of earlier generations, we are also the results of their strayings, sufferings,

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vi, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 255.

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

errors, even crimes ; it is not possible to free oneself from this chain. When we condemn those errors and imagine that we have cancelled them, we cannot set aside the fact that we have sprung from them." Thus critical history too has an evil result ; for depression of soul comes upon us when we realise the truth that we are rooted in iniquity, and life again becomes paralysed. In self-defence then we may begin to imagine for ourselves a past from which we would like to be descended, in contrast to that from which we actually come. But, says Nietzsche, it is dangerous to try to give ourselves, as it were, a second nature in this way, "because it is so difficult to find a limit to the denial of the past, and because second natures are mostly weaker than first natures". The only escape which Nietzsche sees from this difficulty is that of the few who have succeeded in cutting themselves off from the past and in developing a strong self-reliant second nature ; to them critical history can give notable comfort, for it shows them that what appeared to be their first nature was itself an historical product and therefore dissoluble.

If we consider the outcome of Nietzsche's discussion of these three forms of history, we find as the most striking feature the absence of any real attempt to unite them into a single whole in such a way that the disadvantages will be neutralised and the advantages fully utilised. Instead of this we find the same tendency to inner strife and to the combination of warring tendencies which we have already noted in his personality and in his general doctrine. Thus, he argues that we need great examples ; yet they are beyond our reach and are not ultimately true guides for us. We need the past to give support and substance to our lives, and yet if we lean on it, it holds and fetters us. Hence we must also break with the past, and condemn it ; but if we do so we find that we have condemned and rejected ourselves, and brought ourselves down in the universal ruin. History, Nietzsche argues, does all this to us ; we need it, cannot do without it, and yet it harms us and destroys our spiritual life. He sets forth the evil results which follow under five headings, purporting to display the evil characteristics of the culture of his day ; but

## NIETZSCHE

in spite of all the references to historians, to culture at large, and to the institutions of the time, what he is describing is primarily and ultimately the weaknesses he felt in himself.

In the first place, as the result of an excess of the historical outlook, he attributes to his age a conflict and contrast of the outward and inward life, which leads to a weakening of personality and to the enfeeblement of action. Then secondly, the historical spirit has given the age the flattering belief that it possesses in a high degree the virtue of justice. But what passes for justice is in the main, Nietzsche argues, only tolerance, and tolerance is hostile to life. Intolerant himself, indeed almost utterly intolerant, he felt the whole historical attitude to be an implicit criticism of him, and, characteristically rejecting the criticism, he attempted to lay the guilt on others. They appear to be just and impartial, he cries, but they are not so ; they have no real values at all. Thirdly, through an excess of history and through the impartiality and rationality which historical study enjoins, the instincts of a people are restrained and destroyed, and their lives rendered tame, conventional and insipid. Fourthly, there arises the enervating belief that history has already happened, and that we are only the people who come after it and write about it ; we no longer expect to do anything ourselves. Finally, the age adopts an ironical attitude to itself, and an attitude of cynicism to all that claims or appears to be great and noble in the world around it. Nietzsche's discussion of these points is not systematic, but the general effect of it is beyond all doubt : a sense of conflict, a feeling of feebleness, of self-mistrust, and at the same time an intense desire to do and be something great. What he says about the Germany of his time no doubt has some truth in it, but some of it is over-strained, and most of it is incapable of proof. But we may set all that aside here, for what we have before us is the manifest development into early manhood of the boy whom we have already watched leaving school and going to the University of Bonn, full of the same desire for a life he had not yet tasted, full also of a sense of his own awkwardness and incapacity, and resolutely pushing the responsibility

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

for the inward conflict away from him to lay it on the institutions in which he had been trained.

Of course, Nietzsche did not acquiesce in the feeling of weakness and inadequacy which tormented his soul. Placing the responsibility for it explicitly on history, he demanded a reduction in the amount of history taught to youth, the abolition of "objective" history, the subordination of history to life, and the right to live unhistorically. How all this is to be achieved he did not clearly say : all he presented was a confession and a hope. "We ourselves", he wrote, "bear manifest upon us the marks of that suffering which has come upon men of modern times as the result of an excess of history, and I do not wish to hide that this treatise itself, in the intemperateness of its criticism, in the immaturity of its humanity, in the frequent passage from irony to cynicism, shows its modern character, the character of a weak personality. And yet, I trust in the inspiring power which, instead of a genius, steers my vessel. I trust in youth and that it guides me aright when it forces me now to protest against the historical training of the youth of to-day, and to demand that man above all must learn to live, and must use history only in the service of the life thus learned."<sup>1</sup>

But is this trust justified ? Has the hope any rational grounds ? Can the soul of man ever be brought into a harmonious unity, even if it does discard history ? Nietzsche was conscious of these questions, and realised that he had not answered them. He had displayed the weakness ; but had not shown how it was possible to be strong. And so, on finishing this second of his *Untimely Considerations*, he began a third, designed to show the strong, united personality, in so far as it was possible in the existing world. Written rapidly in the spring and summer of 1874, the essay was completed at the beginning of August, and finally appeared in October, with the title of *Schopenhauer as Educator*.

It may strike one that Schopenhauer is a strange figure to set up as a hero. A half-wild feline creature, it might be said,

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 315 f.

## NIETZSCHE

at first thin, starved, and neglected with no settled home, then as he grew stronger, vociferous, inharmonious and combative on the roof-tops, and finally a sour old tom-cat, settling warily into a selfishly-guarded comfort, at no time does he present a genuinely pleasing picture. And yet Nietzsche said he was "great, through and through, and in everything". What were the qualities which attracted Nietzsche and on which his judgment depended?

To some extent we have already considered this question, for we have seen what kind of appeal the philosophy of Schopenhauer made to Nietzsche, when, as a late adolescent, he arrived at Leipzig from Bonn. But the answer does not altogether hold now. Nietzsche's belief in Schopenhauer's philosophy had steadily decreased, and in 1874, that is to say, some nine years later, it had almost disappeared. Nietzsche is not yet prepared to admit this; he tries to cover it over and to convey the impression of belief. "I have never found a paradox in him, although here and there a small error . . ."<sup>1</sup> he says, leaving us to infer that he found no large ones. But the suggestion is false. We have already seen how in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche departed from Schopenhauer's philosophy not so much in detail as in fundamental spirit, and his subsequent writings widened the gap. Nietzsche, in fact, was now beginning to doubt metaphysics altogether, and the scepticism which we have already seen developing eliminated Schopenhauer's view along with all others. Theoretically indefensible and inept, it now seemed to Nietzsche also temperamentally and ethically unacceptable. Schopenhauer preached resignation, although he had no real intention of practising it, and he upheld the ideal of the ascetic and saint — for others. But Nietzsche no longer accepted the ideal of resignation, and the saint was beginning to become a figure of abhorrence to him. The philosophy thus was not now the attraction: wherein then did it lie?

Nietzsche mentions three characteristics in Schopenhauer on which, he says, his admiration is based, viz. his honesty, his cheerfulness and his consistency. Schopenhauer never poses, says

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 47.

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

Nietzsche, and he speaks to himself alone ; “ or if we wish to think of a hearer throughout, we may think of a son whom his father instructs. It is a candid, blunt, good-humoured utterance, in front of a listener who listens with love.” That is the first point. Then secondly, Schopenhauer writes with a real cheerfulness which communicates itself to the reader. This point, perhaps, is not so easy to apprehend, but Nietzsche’s argument is that, having plumbed the depths of human misery, Schopenhauer rises to the surface again in calmness and serenity. Schopenhauer is victorious over life, and at bottom, says Nietzsche, there is cheerfulness only where there is victory. Writers — like Strauss, he adds — who have not faced the miseries of life disgust us with their facile optimism, and are far removed from those conquering spirits who are not overwhelmed, even although the world has crashed in ruin about them, and whose wisdom has found its goal in beauty.

To Nietzsche, Schopenhauer seemed to be a man who had found himself. Like Nietzsche he was out of sympathy with the world around him, and he proclaimed it an evil place ; like Nietzsche too, he found no satisfaction in the ordinary bonds which hold men together, professing to regard them as fetters on his free spirit ; like Nietzsche, and in even higher degree, he was, as it were, functionless in a society where others found tasks of sufficient apparent importance and reality to occupy and satisfy their minds ; but in spite of this lack of social function, this isolation, this disharmony, he seemed in Nietzsche’s eyes to be a unified personality, in command of himself, and not at the mercy of the alien forces around him. This unity, this self-command, this power, Nietzsche himself lacked.

In pursuit of his argument, Nietzsche sets forth three images of great men which have been offered to us one after the other in modern times, viz. those of Rousseau, Goethe and Schopenhauer. “ Of these,” he says, “ the first has the greatest fire and is sure of the most popular effect ; the second is made only for the few who are contemplative by nature in the grand style and are misunderstood by the multitude. The third demands the most active

## NIETZSCHE

men as its beholders ; only they will see it without harm ; for it wears out the contemplative and it frightens the multitude.”<sup>1</sup>

In each of the three there is something which appeals to Nietzsche, although in different ways and in different measure. Rousseau's man is all fire and passion, with a force within him which Nietzsche obscurely felt but could not release. Goethe's man achieves a calm and balance, but at the expense of activity ; and this was also unsatisfactory to Nietzsche. The Schopenhauer man seemed to him nearest to his own case, to his own needs and to his own capacity. But when we examine the content of the conception thus set forth, we find it disappointingly small and poor. Nietzsche says much round about it, but little directly of it itself. Like Schopenhauer, the Schopenhauer man will be honest and will, without reticence, speak his mind about this evil world, in season and out of season. His self-questioning and his candour will bring suffering upon him, and this will isolate him from his fellows ; but he will be free from the influences of his time and place, holding himself aloof from the social and political claims of the community in which he lives ; he will be self-contained and captain of his soul. Having renounced all worldly happiness, he will be beyond illusion and disappointment. He will not be happy, but he will be heroic. And “the heroic man”, says Nietzsche, “despises his good and bad fortune, his virtues and his vices, and all the measuring of things by his own measure, he does not hope for anything more from himself, and wants in all things to see through to the bottom which is free from hope”. Then at this point Nietzsche gives the argument a twist, and voices a hope which, with all his protestation of heroism, he has not given up. “The ancient thinkers sought happiness and truth with all their powers — and the evil principle of nature is that one shall never find what one must seek. But he who seeks untruth in everything and makes friends willingly with unhappiness, will perhaps have prepared for him another miracle of disillusionment : something inexpressible, of which happiness and truth are only idolatrous images, draws near him,

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 72.

## UNTIMELY CONSIDERATIONS

the earth loses its heaviness, the events and powers of the earth become dreamlike, as on a summer evening transformation spreads around him. To him, as he looks, it is as if he had just begun to waken, and as if the clouds of a fading dream were playing around him. These too must sometime be blown away : then it is daylight."

After this stolen glimpse into Paradise, Nietzsche comes back to earth, and soon returns to the familiar and congenial task of criticising the age in which he lived, of belittling the scholars and teachers who were his colleagues, of impugning their motives, of attacking the state for its control of education, and in general of proclaiming the futility of the modern world. Little if any of the argument is new to us, and we need not follow it further. But one point may be made in conclusion. Nietzsche argues that the conditions of modern life, tying a man to a place in society, are hostile to the education and production of geniuses — who in the end alone matter. And when he asks what conditions would most favour the production of philosophers in modern times, he answers in terms which he thinks describe the training which, as it were by chance, Schopenhauer received. A "free manliness of character, early knowledge of mankind, no learned education, no constraint of patriotism, no compulsion to earn a livelihood, no relation to the state — in short, freedom and ever again freedom ; the same wonderful and dangerous element in which the Greek philosophers were allowed to grow up".<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the philosophic plant thrives best through its own inherent power and with no fixed roots ; accordingly, as Nietzsche himself holds, it is no ordinary growth.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 119.



## XIV

### CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

BEFORE he wrote the essay on Schopenhauer Nietzsche began to change. He was no longer the young enthusiast who had composed the dithyrambic *Birth of Tragedy*, and who sought to graft the Wagnerian opera on to the stump of Greek culture. The change was a complex one, producing in the end an almost complete breach with the past. It led Nietzsche away from the Dionysian philosophy which he had so carefully and so recently developed, it separated him from old friends, primarily from the Wagners but in the end from Rohde also, it uprooted him from Basle, and left him, ill and solitary, bereft of his metaphysical comforts, a wanderer on the face of the earth. Writing to Rohde in July 1876, at a time when the inward change had largely reached maturity although the external bonds had not yet been definitely broken, Nietzsche, with as much self-confidence as he could muster, put the position in which he found himself into verse. Here is a rendering of it :

There passed a wanderer through the dark,  
His step was strong :  
Down curving vale, o'er mountain height,  
He strode along.  
Beauteous the night —  
He hastened on, nor did he heed,  
Unresting, where his path might lead.

A bird's song through the night came free.  
" Oh, bird, how hast thou charmed me,  
To check my pace with strange restraint,  
And pour thus forth such sweet complaint  
On me, that I my step restrain,  
And list again,  
To catch thy welcoming refrain ? "

## CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

The good bird ceased to sing and spake ;  
" No, wanderer, no, I greeting make  
To beauteous night,  
Not unto thee. And on thy flight  
Thou must fare ceaselessly along,  
And never comprehend my song.  
Pass on thy way —  
And when thy step rings far away,  
I'll raise again my nightly lay,  
As best I may.  
Oh, fare thee well, poor wand'ring stray."

Not, indeed, immortal poetry, but expressive enough of Nietzsche's feeling to induce him to return to it later and touch it up.

Into the change referred to there entered several elements, difficult to disentangle, and perhaps mutually dependent. One of these was Nietzsche's health, and its influence should not be minimised. As we have already seen, it was as a semi-invalid, recovering from diphtheria and dysentery, that he composed *The Birth of Tragedy* ; and from that time onward he was seldom free from some kind of ailment. His gastric troubles were recurrent, leading him even when in moderate health to restrict his diet. Then his vision was affected. We have already seen how the weakness of his eyes interrupted his work and caused him considerable bodily suffering. Above all he was attacked for years by migraine, with persistent headaches and loss of sleep. Nor is it as if he had been designed by nature to be a weakling. Strongly built, he was physically a powerful man, capable under ordinary good conditions of sustained arduous effort. And this in a way only increased his distress, for his ailments cut him off more and more from his fellows and accentuated the tendency within him, already too great, towards solitariness and isolation. Moreover, his ill-health frustrated him. He could not use his strength, for his defective eyesight rendered him awkward in action and liable to stumble in unfamiliar country. More than once he sprained his ankle. Finally, the undischarged mental irritation, kept up by pain and sleeplessness, was forced to seek

## NIETZSCHE

an outlet, but from the nature of the case could not find one which would adequately relieve the inward strain and excitement. It is against this background that we have to think of Nietzsche when we consider how he developed in the years to come.

Another important factor in the situation at this time is the change in Nietzsche's personal relation to Wagner. The change perhaps was inevitable, although it developed slowly and was subject to fluctuations; but it affected Nietzsche profoundly and he never fully recovered from it. To it therefore we must give some attention.

Nietzsche began to lose touch with the Wagners in April 1872 when they left Tribschen for Bayreuth. Tribschen to him had been a home, and to the idealised hero and heroine he looked up with reverence, affection and devotion. But with the disappearance of the home at Tribschen there vanished also Nietzsche's place in it; and in the new more distant establishment at Bayreuth he did not find a corresponding niche. There was a subtle difference between the atmosphere of Tribschen and Bayreuth, a difference which Nietzsche felt deeply, and which he magnified because it corresponded to a difference developing in himself. In Tribschen, Wagner was an exile, a musician, a poet, a rejuvenator of art, with whom Nietzsche could sympathise to the full. In Bayreuth the emphasis shifted from the art to the recognition of it, and as Wagner strove more for recognition, he gradually became to Nietzsche less the musician, more the producer, and finally, more the showman. As Wagner thus changed in Nietzsche's eyes, Nietzsche's sympathy with him decreased together with the closeness of the intimacy. Moreover, when Wagner left Tribschen, Nietzsche not only from choice but also from necessity, was thrown more on his own resources, and in response began to assert his own freedom and individuality.

The year 1873 began badly. As we have seen, Wagner invited Nietzsche, who was at Naumburg, to come to Bayreuth and to return to Basle from there. Nietzsche did not go. This was perhaps the first time he had refused an invitation of Wagner's when he was really free to accept it, and Wagner took offence.

## CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

Gersdorff had accepted the invitation, and to him Wagner reiterated again and again how dear Nietzsche was to him, but deplored a tendency in him to hold back and go his own way. Nietzsche, however, apparently did not realise that he had given offence, and did not learn of Wagner's displeasure until Cosima mentioned it in a letter in February when it was all over. Wagner wrote soon after to Nietzsche about some papers he had mislaid, and without mentioning the matter. But his letter contained a curious apology for the rather dry tone in which it was written. "Last night", said Wagner, "I had the first good sleep for a long time undisturbed by disgusting conditions. I have fallen out of conceit with many things. There are moments when I lose myself in deep reflection, and at such times you usually appear before me — always connected in some way with Fidi [Wagner's son Siegfried]. But such moments are of short duration and the Wagner societies and Wagner concerts begin to dance around me in giddy circles. Therefore — have patience. Just as I am often obliged to have it with you."<sup>1</sup> An olive branch with a thorn stuck on the end of it !

Nietzsche wrote to Gersdorff in distress : "God knows how often I give offence to the master : every time I wonder about it afresh and cannot rightly find out what is at the back of it. I am all the happier that peace has now been concluded."<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche, however, was not so innocent as his protestations made him out to be. "I cannot think at all", he wrote, "how one could be more loyal to Wagner in all matters of importance, or be more devoted than I am ; if I could think of any further way I would adopt it. But in small subordinate side points, and in certain avoidance of *more frequent* personal intercourse, necessary for me and almost to be called 'sanitary', I must preserve my freedom, really only to be able to maintain that loyalty in a higher sense.

Naturally nothing can be said about it, nevertheless it does make itself felt — and then it is extremely annoying when in addition, irritation, distrust and silence follow it. This time I did

<sup>1</sup> 27th February 1873 ; *Wagner und Nietzsche*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> 24th Feb. 1873.

## NIETZSCHE

not for a moment think that I had given such great offence, and I am always afraid that such experience will make me more timid than I am already." The days of Tribschen were over.

At Easter it was Nietzsche's turn to feel hurt. Partly out of remorse he invited himself to Bayreuth, taking the manuscript of his essay on the Greek philosophers with him, and was dismayed to find Wagner preoccupied with his own tribulations and disinclined to take any real interest in the ancient thinkers. Nietzsche, as we have already seen, returned to Basle disappointed, even angry, and immediately began his attack on Strauss. He then wrote to Wagner in a curiously apologetic, even abject strain, behind which, however, one can trace another and different attitude. "The days spent in Bayreuth", he said, "live constantly in my memory, and in retrospect the newly acquired knowledge and experience assume still greater dimensions. I can perfectly well understand your not having been satisfied with me while I was there, without being able to change this. My excuse must be that I learn and perceive very slowly, and every moment spent in your society I experience something about which I had not thought before and am endeavouring to impress on my mind. I realise clearly, dearest master, that such a visit can be of no refreshment to you, in fact, that it must be almost unbearable at times." Then follows a revealing passage. "I have often wished for the appearance (at least) of independence, but in vain. Enough! I can only implore you to accept me as your pupil, if possible with pen in hand and a copybook spread open before me, and moreover, as a pupil with a very slow and not at all versatile *ingenium*. It is true that I grow more melancholy each day in realising how incapable I am of contributing anything to your diversion and recreation, however, gladly I would be of the slightest service to you."<sup>1</sup> Obviously Nietzsche's sense of discipleship was changing into a painful feeling of inferiority, and the grovelling attitude which he was adopting could not endure in a nature like his.

In October, however, it appeared as if an opportunity for

<sup>1</sup> 18th April 1873; *Wagner und Nietzsche*, p. 156.

## CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

service had presented itself. Financially the Bayreuth theatre project was in grave difficulties, and the managing committee asked Nietzsche to write an appeal to the German nation for subscriptions. Nietzsche produced a manifesto, which he entitled *A Warning Cry to the Germans*; and the change of title, the alteration of an appeal into a warning or admonition, indicates the nature of the contents. Nietzsche's irritation went into his writing. He lectured his fellow countrymen on the duty of supporting German art in the person of Wagner, berated them for their indifference and for the obstacles they placed in the way of a revival of the ancient spirit through the new tragic opera. On seeing the draft of the manifesto, Rohde remarked that it was a splendid thing for those who were already enthusiastic Wagnerians, but unlikely to gain recruits or money from the rest. The committee at Bayreuth took the same view as Rohde, and in spite of approval given to Nietzsche's statement by the Wagners, the committee rejected it in favour of a milder one by a Dr. Stern. Nietzsche did not say much about the matter, but he must have been mortified.

In spite of Dr. Stern's mildness, however, Wagnerian affairs continued to go badly. Interest in them did not seem to increase, funds did not come in, and the whole project at Bayreuth seemed destined to fail. One of Wagner's strongest and steadiest supporters, Dr. Heckel of Mannheim, tried to induce the Grand Duke of Baden to interest the Berlin authorities in the Bayreuth project, on the ground that the opening festival, which was expected to take place in 1876 and at which *The Ring* was to be performed, could be regarded as a celebration of the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of peace with conquered France. The Grand Duke, however, knowing Berlin, refused to intervene.

It may not be without importance that at the end of 1873, when things were at their blackest, Nietzsche came again briefly into contact with his old teacher Ritschl. Here is the account he gave to Rohde in a letter, dated the last day of the year :

"My dear good friend, how you have revived me by your letter, when I lay in bed, ill from my journey, and somewhat

## NIETZSCHE

out of humour with life ! Really if I did not have my friends, I should like to know whether I should not have to think I was wrong in the head. But I support myself by you, and if we guarantee one another, in the end something must yet result from our way of thinking ; which up till now all the world doubts.

For example, even the Ritschls, to whom I paid a short visit, and who for half an hour kept up a rapid fire of words on me, by which I was quite unwounded, and even felt myself so. In the end the conclusion was that I was haughty and despised them. The general impression was hopeless : old Ritschl at one time began to rave against Wagner as a poet, and then against the French (I am considered an admirer of the French), finally, by hearsay, but in the most atrocious way, he criticised Overbeck's book. I learned that Germany was in an uncouth hobbledchoy stage, and that on that account I assumed the right to show some uncouthness myself (that is to say, my intemperance and crudeness against Strauss were denounced). On the other hand, Strauss is really abolished as a classical writer of prose ; for Father and Mother Ritschl say so and find even his ' Voltaire ' frightfully affected."

Nietzsche's tone is light here, but it is probable that he was far from easy in mind. Surely something was wrong somewhere. Of course Wagner was right, his philosophy was sound, his music was the way to a new and higher civilisation ; but perhaps there was some reason besides natural perversity for the widespread indifference and even aversion to him. Was it possible that in some way or other the fault lay partly in Wagner himself ? Nietzsche had come to realise in his own person that Wagner could offend and repel as well as charm and attract. Perhaps, he now began to reflect to himself, this double aspect is not merely a matter of one's own personal relation to Wagner, but corresponds to something deeply rooted in Wagner's character and art as a whole, so that a new valuation of them may be necessary. In this mood, with more critical and partly disillusioned eyes, Nietzsche began in January 1874 to reconsider his estimate of

## CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

Wagner, and to write down in secret his thoughts about him. The Wagnerian enterprise, he thought, had failed : how far could the failure be due to Wagner himself?

At this stage Nietzsche did not set down his ideas about Wagner in any clear logical order. What we have is a collection of notes, written at different times and in different moods, and not wholly consistent with one another. Certain general tendencies, however, are manifest in them.

Wagner was endeavouring to persuade his fellow countrymen to take art seriously. For him art was not a mere ornament or a diversion for idle moments ; it was a universal need, something that life itself demanded, the completion and redemption of life. Wagner gave to art as high a place in the scheme of things and attached as great importance to it as Schopenhauer did.

From this it followed that the arts cannot justly be separated from one another ; they must be not only intertwined but also ultimately derived from one root. In isolation they are imperfect, weakened, almost trivial : to become great they must be reunited and regarded as the quintessence of life itself.

Nietzsche realised this, and when he considered how Wagner achieved, or tried to achieve, this unity, he decided that his fundamental attitude was that of the actor. He uses the other arts, music, painting, poetry ; but the initial, final and organising point of view, to which everything else is subordinated, is that of the stage. Of course, there is something behind the actor : there is life itself, the inward significance of things, which is to be expressed in the drama, and in reference to this aspect Wagner, according to Nietzsche's view, did not differ from any other artist who has a genuine inspiration. What is characteristic of him, Nietzsche thought, is the form which this inward impulse takes. Here is how Nietzsche put it. Wagner "has before him the picture of inward nature becoming visible, of soul-processes showing themselves as movement ; this is what he wants to conform to. In a highly Schopenhauerian fashion he wants to express the will directly."<sup>1</sup> "Movement"—that is the important

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 345.



## NIETZSCHE

word here ; or "gesture", as Nietzsche generally expresses it elsewhere. Not thought, not meaning, not drama in the ordinary sense where stress is laid on plot and logical coherence ; but movement as the direct expression of an inward impulse — the dance, a series of rhythmic changing attitudes in which the underlying impulse is directly embodied.

Prior to Wagner, Nietzsche thought, there had been two points of view in the treatment of drama. According to the first, the drama was the dominant aspect, the end ; the music was a means to it and was accommodated to the emotions and situations of the plot. But as music developed it gained independence, and the essence of the opera passed from the drama to the music, so that the music was no longer merely a means to support and enhance the dramatic action. The music became something with an independent content and structure, and the drama, with its plot and individual characters and actions, was merely an example or instance of it. That is to say, the music suggested actions and events to suit it, particular ways in which its wider and more universal feelings could be realised and exemplified. This view is not far from that put forward by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but he now realised, perhaps with some dismay, that Wagner rejected it. For Wagner, Nietzsche now clearly sees, the music is not absolute or in any sense an end in itself ; it is a means of expression, indeed at second remove, for what it expresses is movement or gesture, and only through that does it reach the emotions and the will.

But how are the different aspects of art to be brought together, and above all how is music to be deprived of its position of independence and turned into a means of expression ? The problem, Nietzsche reflects, cannot be adequately solved if the actor or playwright, the poet and the musician are different people and have to accommodate their activities externally to one another ; but a solution is possible, if the playwright is also at the same time musician and poet — as Wagner was — and if he composes, as it were, in the different media simultaneously. But under these conditions the separate arts lose their independ-

## CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

ence, ceasing to be self-contained and organic in themselves. Music is no longer to be judged by absolute standards, and obtains its significance only as an integral part of the whole. Such a composer, says Nietzsche, "presupposes a very richly developed music, which has already gained a fixed, recognisable and recurring expression for a vast number of emotions. By these musical quotations he calls to the mind of the hearer a definite mood in the light of which the actor wishes to be understood."<sup>1</sup> When this is done — as Wagner did it — music has really become a means of expression, and on that account has been deposed to a lower level, being no longer organic in itself. Nevertheless, playing its part in the whole, it has great value.

Such is Wagner's point of view, but in adopting it, Nietzsche thought, he showed how little he was really in touch with German culture, and indeed how un-German he was. In order to give art the commanding place in life which he claimed for it, Wagner took the theatre as his basis, and "here", says Nietzsche, "the crowd is still really moved and does not humbug itself as in museums and concerts". Wagner's significance is that he tries to achieve mastery, or tyranny, by means of the theatre crowd. "There can be no doubt", adds Nietzsche, "that if Wagner were Italian he would have reached his end." But, he goes on, "the German has no respect for opera and always treats it as something imported and un-German. Indeed he does not take the theatre as a whole seriously.

There is something comical here. Wagner cannot persuade the Germans to take the theatre seriously. They remain cold and good-humoured — he gets excited as if the salvation of the Germans were at stake. Moreover, the Germans think at present that they have something more serious to do, and such a solemn devotion to art seems to them an amusing, exaggerated enthusiasm."<sup>2</sup> To the Germans, Nietzsche thinks, the essence of life did not lie in art. They were much more interested in the other aspects of life, and when they turned to art from their other occupations, from business, from politics, and from everything else that seemed to

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 338.

## NIETZSCHE

them of importance and gravity, they looked in it for a little amusing relaxation. "A serious nation", says Nietzsche, "will keep a few frivolities from disappearing, as the Germans do the theatrical arts.

Chief thing: the significance of an art like Wagner's does not fit into our social and business relations. Hence an instinctive aversion to the unsuitable thing."

But on the other hand, it is possible that a change may yet come about. Nietzsche realises the force of Wagner's point of view and, in spite of the appearance of defeat, admits his greatness. Thus at the end of the notes he writes: "It is a serious possibility that Wagner may give the Germans a distaste for occupying themselves with the separate individual arts. Perhaps one of his after-effects will be to produce the picture of a unified culture, not to be reached by adding together separate products and pieces of knowledge." And again: "He has the feeling of unity in variety — for that reason I regard him as a bearer of culture".<sup>1</sup>

But the raising of the whole involves the depressing of the parts, and Nietzsche cannot forget this aspect of the matter. "In great matters", he says, "Wagner is regular and rhythmic, in details often violent and unrhythmic."<sup>2</sup> "Wagner is a legislative being: he has in view many relationships and is not entangled in detail, he arranges everything as a whole and is not to be judged by separate particulars — music, drama, poetry, state, art, etc." Then he goes on: "The music is not worth much, nor the poetry, nor the drama, the stage-craft is often only rhetoric — but in the whole everything is one and at a high level".<sup>3</sup>

Then another aspect strikes Nietzsche. Wagner is essentially an actor, but one who could not use his gifts naturally, and himself act on the stage because, says Nietzsche, "he lacks figure, voice and the necessary modesty". His gift, therefore, sought another outlet, and manifests itself in his compositions. But an actor is greatly concerned with effect, with the task of impressing the public; and so Nietzsche begins to dwell on this

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 340 f.

## CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

aspect in Wagner. Wagner's appeal is not to the *élite* but to the theatre crowd, a rather mixed mob, with which broad, striking effects go down better than refinements and restraint. "Not to be forgotten", says Nietzsche: "it is a theatrical language that Wagner's art speaks; it does not belong to the room, to the *camera*. It is a mode of speech of the people, and it cannot think even of what is noblest without coarsening it greatly."<sup>1</sup> Is Wagner's music in itself then truly great? "I have often absurdly doubted", Nietzsche answers, "whether Wagner were musically gifted." And he adds reflectively, "None of our great masters was such a bad musician at the age of twenty-eight as Wagner".<sup>2</sup> Wagner is effective: how far is he really artistic? "Wagner values the simplicity of the dramatic plan," says Nietzsche, "because it has the strongest effect. He brings together all effective elements, in a time which needs very crude and strong means on account of its obtuseness. The magnificent, the intoxicating, bewildering, the grandiose, the frightful, the noisy, the ugly, ecstatic, nervous,—all are available. Huge dimensions, huge means."

"The abnormal, the extravagant splendour, makes the impression of wealth and luxuriousness. He knows what impresses our people; moreover, he still idealises 'our people' and thinks very highly of them." Here and there throughout the notes, Nietzsche emphasises this aspect of Wagner. "As an actor he desired to imitate man only as a most effective and real being: in his strongest emotion. For in all other conditions his extreme nature saw weakness and untruth. For the artist the danger of painting emotions is very great. The intoxicating, the sensuous, the ecstatic, the sudden emotion at any price—terrible tendencies."<sup>3</sup>

Earlier, perhaps when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche might have accepted and even welcomed the emphasis on these things—"the intoxicating, the sensuous, the ecstatic, the sudden emotion"; but now, physically and mentally altered, he often recoils: Wagner is too crude for him, too raw, too common,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 341 f.

## NIETZSCHE

too popular, too near the sources of life and feeling, and too formless. In the view which appealed most to Nietzsche himself, not only now but also earlier, the artistic inspiration expresses itself first in music, then from music it passes over into the choral dance and into drama, so that the drama, and in particular tragedy, is not governed immediately by the passions, but mediately through music. Thereby it acquires its form, for form is essential to music ; without form and rhythm music is nothing. But movement or gesture, which for Wagner is the first thing, is not formal in the same degree, and lags far behind music. Thus, when Wagner lets the opera be dominated by movement, he is placing over it something as yet unrhythmic and formless, and forcing music almost directly into the service of untransformed and inartistic passion. " Art cannot do anything with a nature to which no form has been given ", says Nietzsche ; and that, he now feels, is what Wagner overlooks. " To force music into the service of a naturalistic passionateness disintegrates it, confuses it itself, and makes it incapable later of carrying out the common task." <sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche has now turned round. He began by stressing the form of the whole, and the subordination of the parts to it ; now he feels that Wagner's organising principle itself is formless and that the weakness and inorganic character of the parts is due to the inorganic character of the whole. Wagner makes a strong, immensely strong, sensuous appeal, and the passion which he expresses communicates itself powerfully, almost hypnotically, to the hearer ; but the appeal is too direct, and Nietzsche is beginning to doubt whether it is really one of art. " The giving-up of great rhythmic periods," says Nietzsche, " the continued retention of phrases, gives indeed the impression of the endlessness of the sea ; but it is an artifice and not the regular law which Wagner wanted to proclaim it to be. At first we grasp at it and try to find periods, but we are continually deceived, and in the end we throw ourselves into the waves." <sup>2</sup>

Finally, behind Nietzsche's analysis and criticism of Wagner

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 344 f.

## CONSIDERATION OF WAGNER

as an artist, there is a dawning conception of a fundamental philosophic difference. Once Nietzsche shared Wagner's point of view; but he is changing, and Wagner, together with Schopenhauer, is beginning to appear as something unhealthy — Nietzsche is now out of tune both with strong crude passion and with renunciation of life. The odour of the charnel-house is no longer a sweet savour to his nostrils. In Wagner's art, says Nietzsche, "there is an element of flight from this world, it negates it, it does not transform this world. Thus the effect it produces is not directly moral, but indirectly quietistic. Only when he is preparing a place for his art in this world, do we see him busy and active: but what have a Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Tristan, Siegfried, to do with us? That seems, however, to be the fate of art, in a time like the present it takes a part of its strength from the religion that is dying out. Therein lies the bond between Wagner and Schopenhauer. It indicates that perhaps culture will soon again exist only in the form of cloistered sects: which avert themselves from the world. Schopenhauer's 'Will to live' gets its artistic expression here, this gloomy striving without purpose, this ecstasy, this despair, this tone of suffering and desire, this accent of love and fervour. Seldom a cheerful ray of the sun, but much magical conjuring with the lighting."<sup>1</sup>

Clearly more is involved here than personality. These do enter into the situation, as we have already seen, but there is more behind. Both in matters of art and in his general outlook on life Nietzsche has changed his position; he has slipped his moorings, and is putting out to sea: we shall have to follow him on his voyage.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 355 f.

## XV

### WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

THE change of outlook which became manifest to Nietzsche himself in January 1874, persisted and even developed, but apart from the private notes which we have just considered it found no open expression for the time being. The result in Nietzsche's mind, naturally, was an increase in the inward tension, which was already sufficiently great, and which he occasionally tried to relieve in the secrecy of his correspondence with Gersdorff and Rohde. In February he confessed the change to Rohde, without indicating its nature. The proofs of the Second of the *Untimely Considerations*, that on History, had just been returned to the printer, and Nietzsche remarked: "Since Christmas I have turned so many things over in my mind and been forced to roam in such distant regions that, when proof sheets turn up, I often doubt when I really wrote this stuff, indeed whether it is all mine".

In February, however, Nietzsche saw a statement in the papers that the financial difficulties of the Bayreuth undertaking had been cleared away. Mentioning this to Rohde, he called it a miracle, adding that if it is confirmed and the miracle is really true, "it does not upset the outcome of my considerations. But we shall want to be happy and hold a celebration." The information was sufficient to prevent Nietzsche from developing his new views about Wagner for the moment or from communicating them to his friends.

When the essay on History, just referred to, came from the press, Nietzsche naturally sent a copy of it to Bayreuth, but he was disappointed with the reception of it there. Wagner wrote in a general, enthusiastic and laudatory strain, but referred Nietzsche for details to his wife's letter. Cosima praised liberally,

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

but she also criticised the style and suggested that Nietzsche had addressed his message to the wrong people — to the cultured Philistines, who would not read it, instead of to the “ literary nomads ” who were better representatives of the true German spirit. Nietzsche was definitely disappointed, and he attempted to get rid of some of his ill-humour in a letter to Gersdorff, dated 1st April, and replying to Gersdorff’s praise of the essay. “ Dear true friend, if only you had not much too good an opinion of me ! I am pretty sure that some day you will be a little undeceived regarding me ; and will myself begin to bring this about by declaring to you from the best knowledge I have of myself, that I *do not deserve* any of your praise. Could you know in what a despondent and melancholy way I regard myself *fundamentally* as a producing being. I seek nothing further than some freedom, some real joy of life, and guard myself and rebel against the great, unspeakably great, bondage which clings to me. But of a real producing there can be no talk at all, so long as one is still so little out of this bondage, out of the suffering and the burdening feeling of restraint : shall I ever reach it ? Doubt upon doubt. The aim is too distant, and when one comes moderately near it, one has generally also used up one’s powers in the long seeking and struggling. . . . It is a misfortune to become conscious of one’s struggle, and so soon. Nor can I set off against this anything I have produced, as the artist or ascetic may be able to do. How miserable and repulsive this bittern-like complaining often is !— At the moment I have quite enough of it and to spare.

My general health is excellent : don’t worry at all. But I am very displeased with Nature, which ought to have given me rather more understanding, as well as a fuller heart — I always fail to attain the best. To know this is the greatest torment of man.” Then follows a sentence which it is well to note, and which it may be profitable to keep in mind for its bearing on Nietzsche’s philosophy as a whole : “ Regular work in an official post is so good, because it brings with it a certain stupor : thus we suffer less ”.



## NIETZSCHE

It is necessary to exercise care in interpreting Nietzsche's moods from his correspondence, as may be seen from a letter written on 1st June to Rohde, who at the time was undergoing considerable mental strain. "Tell me, dearest friend, will you too not make use of the same means of cure that I myself, as well as Overbeck, use? Open the veins and let a little blood flow — in an untimely way, say the others who regard blood-letting as a discredited and out of date method of treatment. I mean: will you not one day just unburden yourself a little of your and our misery, and say what you suffer. Without any doubt there is something satisfying in telling people bluntly how one of us really feels among them. We get rid of the tape-worm melancholy by writing — by forcing the others to swallow our writings." Curious but revealing metaphors.

In April, however, Nietzsche himself had not proved his remedy effective, and when his sister arrived to stay with him towards the end of the month she found him in a depressed state of mind. He had, however, begun the third of the *Untimely Considerations*, on Schopenhauer, and as it progressed in his hands, his spirits began to rise again. In May, Nietzsche had to lay the essay aside for a little on account of the pressure of his ordinary duties, but in June he finished the first rough draft of it.

While Nietzsche was doing this he received a very warm invitation from both Wagner and Cosima to come to Bayreuth. Nietzsche refused to go then. Instead, he made a plan to go to a small village in the high Alps with Romundt for the month of July, and there do some more work on his Schopenhauer essay. Wagner, who perhaps understood Nietzsche better than Nietzsche imagined, did not take offence this time and left the invitation open. Gersdorff, however, who had become extremely friendly with the Wagners, was greatly concerned about Nietzsche's aloofness and the generally miserable state of mind which his letters revealed, and, unknown to Wagner, he endeavoured to put pressure on Nietzsche to come to Bayreuth where he himself was staying. In reply Nietzsche showed a little resentment. He made the excuse that the Wagners' home and their life was in

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

such a state of unrest that a visit would be untimely, but the real point partly appeared later in his letter when he said : " Finally, I beg you not to lose sight of the fact that I have obligations to myself, and that these obligations are difficult to discharge on account of my none too robust health. Really no one shall force me to do anything. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

In August, however, after completing the Schopenhauer essay for the time being, Nietzsche and his sister went to Bayreuth. The Wagners were cordial, but Nietzsche was restrained, and one unusual incident took place. In the spring Nietzsche had heard a performance of Brahms' *Song of Triumph*, and had bought a copy of the score. He knew the complete opposition of outlook between Wagner and Brahms and Wagner's antipathy to the latter's music. Nevertheless, one day he deliberately placed the score, which, belligerently enough, was bound in red, on top of the piano where Wagner saw it every time he came into the room. " I knew perfectly well ", said Wagner later to Nietzsche's sister, " that Nietzsche wished to say to me : ' See here ! Here is someone else who can compose something worth while ! ' I stood it as long as I could, and then one evening I let myself go, and how I did rage ! "<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche was greatly taken aback, grew red in the face, and stared at the passionate Wagner with an air of outraged dignity, which made a considerable impression on him. The incident is interesting. Two intolerant beings, of utterly different temperament, coming into open collision for a moment : Wagner, quicker, more active, more mobile, relieving his mind at once with eager, passionate, unconsidered and even coarse speech ; Nietzsche, tenser, more awkward, more naïve, perhaps more persistent, unable to let himself go in any action, even of a verbal sort, therefore more brooding, and able to find relief only — " in writing ". Wagner lost the feeling of annoyance almost immediately ; with Nietzsche it remained much longer.

On returning to Basle from Bayreuth, Nietzsche rewrote the last part of his essay on Schopenhauer and sent it to the press.

<sup>1</sup> 4th July 1874.

<sup>2</sup> *Wagner und Nietzsche*, p. 203.

## NIETZSCHE

It appeared in October and was enthusiastically received by the Wagners, to Nietzsche's greater contentment.

Nietzsche was conscious throughout the summer of this year that his whole mental orientation was changing, and he made many plans both for study and writing. When the Schopenhauer essay, the third of the *Untimely Considerations*, was safely delivered, Nietzsche began to contemplate a fourth — in which his ideas on Classical Education, which had not yet reached the world at large, should be put into final and definite form. He therefore began to make a series of notes entitled *We Philologists*, and in the pleasure of delineating the few just men in the world of classical teaching and condemning all the rest most heartily, he forgot or ignored for the moment his other troubles. Early next year, with Gersdorff's help as an amanuensis, he made a draft of the first chapter, and after the latter's departure he continued to add a few other notes ; but the enthusiasm died away, and in the end Nietzsche set the work aside, never to resume it. What it might have become we cannot tell, but as it is it is scrappy and not altogether coherent. It contains many points of interest, but little that is new to us ; and in the main the basis on which it stands has already been set forth above in the discussion of Nietzsche's view of Greek culture and of the educational institutions of Germany. We need not therefore consider it here.

At the end of 1874 Nietzsche became a member of a small social circle in Basle, consisting, in addition to Overbeck and Romundt, of two other young professors with their wives, and a local dignitary, von Miaskowski, with his wife. The group met weekly in the houses of the married members, and here Nietzsche could cast off much of his stiffness and display himself more fully and more easily than usual. His letters of the same period, however, betray on the whole a different mood, and when Cosima wrote in high spirits of the Christmas festivities and rejoicing at the new house, Wahnfried, in Bayreuth, Nietzsche replied in such a doleful key that Wagner was led to friendly protest.

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

"Your letter has given rise to renewed uneasiness about you. My wife will write you at length on this subject in a few days, but I happen to have a free quarter of an hour and I am going to devote this to you, possibly to your annoyance. I must let you know what we have been saying about you; one thing was that never in my life did I have such opportunities of male companionship as you seem to have in Basle; but if you are all determined to be hypochondriacs, then this intercourse will be of no value to you. . . . Of one thing I am firmly convinced, that is you must either get married or write an opera. One would do you just about as much good — or harm — as the other. But of the two, I advise you to marry.

In the meantime I can recommend a palliative, but you are so in the habit of looking after your own apothecary that it is impossible for anyone to prescribe for you. For example, when we built our house, we made arrangements to offer you an asylum at any time, such as was never offered to me even in the time of my direst necessity. The plan was for you to spend your entire summer vacation here with us, but no sooner has winter set in than you cautiously announce your intention of spending the summer on a high and remote peak of the Swiss Alps. Can that be otherwise construed than as a refusal of our invitation in advance? We could be of great help to you. Why do you scorn this assistance on every occasion? Gersdorff and all the others always enjoy being here. . . .

I shall say nothing more on the subject, however, as I realise that it is not of the slightest use. For heaven's sake, do marry a rich wife! Why was Gersdorff born a man? Or go off on a long trip and enrich your mind with all the beautiful experiences which make Hellebrand [a writer on aesthetic theory concerning whom Wagner and Nietzsche differed] so versatile and enviable (in your eyes) and then — write your opera, which I know will be scandalously difficult to perform. What Satan made a pedagogue of you? . . ."<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of 1875 the Wagners planned a tour which

<sup>1</sup> *Wagner und Nietzsche*, p. 213 f.

## NIETZSCHE

would take them both away from Bayreuth for a considerable time, and they were perplexed about providing proper care for their children. Cosima then wrote to Nietzsche suggesting that his sister might come to Bayreuth and manage the house during their absence. Nietzsche liked the idea, for it would keep him in touch with the Wagners admirably without involving him in personal contacts, and he urged his sister to accept the invitation. Then suddenly and unexpectedly his mother objected. She had never been quite reconciled to the Wagners' mode of life and thought, and always to some extent grudged the amount of time Elizabeth spent with her brother. Now if in addition to that Elizabeth were to go to Bayreuth, it seemed as if she would become altogether lost to Naumburg. So there was a little heated argument; but in the end the mother gave way and Elizabeth went to Bayreuth. One of Nietzsche's letters to his sister over this small storm is worth quoting for the light it throws upon him. Speaking of his mother, he asks: "But how does it come about that she could so misunderstand me and conceal till now an enmity, so inconceivable to me, against both the Wagners? Am I so difficult to know, so easy to misapprehend in all my intentions, plans and friendships? Ah, we who are lonely and free in spirit — we see that in some way or other we continually appear otherwise than we think: while we intend nothing but truth and honesty, there is round us a net of misunderstandings; and our best desires cannot prevent a mist of false opinions, of accommodation, of half-concessions, of forbearing silence, of deceptive interpretation, from lying over all we do. This gathers a cloud of melancholy on our brow; for we hate worse than death that seeming should be a necessity, and such an exasperation about it makes us volcanic and menacing. From time to time, we take revenge for our violent concealment, for our enforced restraint. We come out of our cave with frightening looks, our words and deeds are then explosions, and it is possible that we collapse within ourselves. *In such a dangerous fashion do I live.* It is just we lonely ones who need love, want companions with whom we can be as open and simple as we are

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

with ourselves, in whose presence the struggle of suppression and dissembling is at an end.

Yes, I am glad that I can let myself go to you openly and honestly : for you are such a good friend and companion, and certainly the older you grow and the more you get out of the Naumburg atmosphere, the more you will grow into my views and endeavours." Then, perhaps feeling that, however true the ideas might be, he had dramatised himself unduly, Nietzsche wrote in the margin : " You can read all this in my Schopenhauer — but they are all my own experiences and feelings, which are ever returning to me — as, for example, now ".<sup>1</sup>

Peace, however, was quickly restored, and soon Nietzsche was congratulating his mother on her birthday, and in rather heavy academic fashion treating her as younger in spirit than himself. From his own point of view, however, he wrote : " The years run on, and I am far from regarding life as a beautiful discovery ".<sup>2</sup>

The year 1875 was a difficult one for Nietzsche. It was marked by some ill-health and by quiet but disturbing inward change and reorientation, both towards Wagner and towards life in general. On the one hand, he did not see the Wagners at all in 1875 ; indeed, after his visit to Bayreuth in August 1874 Nietzsche did not see Wagner until the festival in July 1876 — a lapse of almost two years. On the other hand, he wrote the greater part of an article on Wagner and Bayreuth, explicitly in Wagner's defence and praise ; but he found himself unable to finish it in 1875 and set it aside as unsatisfactory and unsuitable for publication.

Nietzsche intended to see Wagner, and was still full of enthusiasm for him. At Easter he bought the newly published piano score of *The Twilight of the Gods*, and his comment on it was brief but emphatic : " It is Heaven on Earth ". And he looked forward with expressions of gladness to the great rehearsals which were to take place in the middle of the year and at which all the faithful would be gathered together. But as the summer approached Nietzsche's health grew worse. His eyes,

<sup>1</sup> 22nd Jan. 1875.

<sup>2</sup> 31st Jan. 1875.

## NIETZSCHE

as usual, were in poor condition, and he had a recrudescence of gastric troubles. Part of the responsibility for this latter condition was laid on the hotel and boarding-house life which Nietzsche led, and so he and his sister planned to set up an establishment of their own in Basle, in which the cooking would be to Nietzsche's taste and needs. But meanwhile something had to be done : so Nietzsche decided, on medical advice, to take a cure at Steinabad in the Black Forest. This occupied the whole of the summer holidays and prevented Nietzsche from going to Bayreuth. In his letters from Steinabad he discoursed on his health, on his diet, on the success which the treatment had in reducing the size of his enlarged stomach, on the other people there, with whom, however, he did not mix, on Bayreuth with its gatherings and activities : and throughout there is a tone of contentment and no trace of disappointment. "I go about a good deal in the woods", he wrote home, "and in that way amuse myself exceedingly, and so far have had no tedious hours ; thinking things out, thinking them over, hoping, trusting, partly in the past but much more in the future, thus am I living and recuperating greatly by so doing."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Nietzsche's letters to Rohde at Bayreuth at this time are the most revealing of all. Rohde himself had been suffering, and Nietzsche writes : "Care and sorrow pain me most when I see that one can do nothing and that things must be allowed to run their course, however merciless they may be. And then it seems to me at times as if I myself were something of a favourite of fortune and had hitherto always escaped the hardest attacks of suffering. In particular as yet I have not suffered at all from the stupidities and evils of fate, and am not at all worthy to show myself in the ranks of the really unhappy." Further down in the same letter, after referring to the difficulties of another friend, he exclaims : "Desperation everywhere ! And I don't have it ! And yet I am not at Bayreuth ! Do you understand how that can be reconciled ? I can hardly do so. And yet for more than three quarters of the day I am there in spirit and flit about Bayreuth like a ghost. You need not be afraid of exciting longing in my

<sup>1</sup> 25th July 1875.

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

soul, tell me quite a lot, dearest friend. On my walks I fairly often conduct to myself whole pieces of music that I know by heart, and hum as I do 'so.'"<sup>1</sup> One can see the convalescent making his solitary way through the woods, with half-vacant gaze, beating time with his hand to the wordless drone of the Wagnerian melodies: alone, content to be alone, and for a time at least to have the friends he treasures at a safe distance from him.

On 12th August Nietzsche returned to Basle with greatly restored health, and set up house with his sister. He worked for a little at his essay on Wagner, but was unsatisfied with it. He then turned to other work, chiefly to his unfinished essay on *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, which we have already considered. But at the end of the year ill-health returned, all work had to be given up for some time and he went on holiday with Gersdorff to Geneva. Meanwhile the Bayreuth Festival was coming nearer, and the pressure on Nietzsche's mind became greater till it proved in the end irresistible. Early in 1876, therefore, he again took up the manuscript on Wagner which he had completed as far as the end of section 8. Rapidly he wrote three more sections, 9, 10 and 11, and sent the essay to the press early in June. The printing was soon finished, and the small work appeared shortly before the festival in the middle of July.

It is unnecessary to say much here about the notes which Nietzsche made on Wagner at Steinabad, for most of the points in them appear in one way or another in the essay itself, but at the beginning there is a personal reference and confession, which is not repeated, and which yet deserves mention.

Some of those who recognised the value of Wagner's work, Nietzsche says, were but little moved personally by it, whereas others in whom the true fire of enthusiasm glowed were unable to express their feeling in words. "Between those who lack feeling", Nietzsche goes on, "and those who lack speech I stand in the middle: to confess this is neither arrogant nor too

<sup>1</sup> 1st Aug. 1875.



## NIETZSCHE

modest, but merely painful ; exactly why no one needs to know. However, from my mid-position I derive a feeling that it is my duty to speak, and to say something in a more significant way than has yet been done in connection with these events. From necessity I give up all pretension of bringing into form and connection the very varied considerations to which I feel myself impelled. One could of course produce the impression of a rounded whole by some art of illusion : I will remain sincere and say that I cannot at present do better than I am doing here, though in fact I am doing it badly enough.”<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this statement we need not be surprised to find that the essay itself bears traces of indecision and in some measure is lacking in a coherent plan. For this artistic and logical weakness there seem to be several reasons.

In the first place, the essay was not written at one time nor under the influence of a single determining mood. We have already seen that Nietzsche set the manuscript aside in October 1875, when he had written as far as section 8, and did not take it up again for some six months, when three concluding sections were added largely under external pressure. But this is not all ; there is another even more noticeable incongruity of mood within the first eight sections themselves. In the first six sections the argument follows a reasonably straightforward and continuous course to a definite, though in one sense rather obscure, ending. It starts with an insistence on the importance of the theme, then in two consecutive sections, viz. the second and the third, it gives an acute critical discussion, largely from a psychological point of view, of Wagner himself, of the obstacles he had to face, of the dangers he underwent, of the complexity of his nature and of the way in which through toil, disappointment and struggle he reached the strength and unity of his maturity. The paragraphs in which this is set forth lead naturally to the treatment of Wagner as essentially a constructive thinker and artist, who looks forward to action, not back to history, and who subordinates everything to the development and enrichment of

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, p. 361.

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

life itself. This conception is developed in the fourth section, where by means of a classical parallel Wagner is represented as one who has to restore unity to life and weave its tangled ends into a single and simple scheme. Then follows a characteristic attack by Nietzsche on thought as a corrupting and misleading influence in life, and an insistence that the correct attitude, the correct feeling or disposition, must be restored — through music. Here another classical reference is introduced, and then the thought, after passing naturally in the sixth section to a criticism of the modern perversions of true culture, concludes with a long passage, written in an almost Messianic strain. Wagner, with his redeeming music, we are told, is no chance product or accident, but is the result of some deep mysterious necessity. For this, Nietzsche says, we can give no adequate reason, but perhaps, he suggests, “the greater thing may really exist for the sake of the lesser, the greatest gift on account of the smallest, the highest virtue and holiness for the sake of those who are defective. Has true music to ring out”, he goes on to ask, “because man least of all deserves to hear it, but most of all has need of it?” Then follows a concluding sentence providing a suitable mystical climax to the argument: “Let one sink oneself only for a moment in the transcendent miracle of this possibility; from thence let one look back on life, it will then shine with light, however overcast and wrapped in cloud it may have seemed before”.<sup>1</sup>

After this it might seem that there is little more to be said, but in the next section the discussion suddenly, and without obvious reason, twists to a new direction. A new feeling lies behind it. Towards the end of section 6 Nietzsche declares enthusiastically that Wagner’s music provides a bridge between self and not-self; in section 7 he begins in effect by denying this, and he brings this contrast of self and not-self into prominence in a very special form, viz. that of the contrast between himself and Wagner. “The observer,” says Nietzsche, and he is speaking of himself, “before whose gaze stands such a

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 6, p. 285.

## NIETZSCHE

person as Wagner, will necessarily be thrown back upon himself, and will ask himself: Where do you come in? What are you doing here?"<sup>1</sup> The only answer that may suggest itself — and here Nietzsche is reporting directly some of his own earlier experience — is the strangeness and embarrassment which he feels when he contemplates himself. It is clear that the whole discussion has taken a subjective turn which it lacked before, and Nietzsche is considering his own relation to Wagner rather than Wagner himself. This is even clearer as the section goes on. Nietzsche does not deny Wagner's strength; on the contrary he emphasises it and dwells on its abundant nature. But having said this, he reverts to the consideration of his own position. "When the observer is apparently succumbing to Wagner's outward streaming and overflowing nature, he has himself acquired some of its strength, and is thus, as it were, made strong *by him against him*." The italics are Nietzsche's, and they tell their own story. Even the very act of contemplation, Nietzsche continues, involves "a mysterious opposition" to the person contemplated. He is not more explicit than this here, but he has said enough to show the changed attitude, the challenging mood, in which he is now writing.

This brings us to a second source of disharmony in the essay, viz. Nietzsche's developing personal antagonism to Wagner, his desire for independence, and perhaps even his desire for domination. It is in the light of this tendency that we have to consider some of the obscure and apparently unmotivated utterances in this and other sections. One example is enough here. In section 7, after Wagner's almost magical strength has been fully stressed and illustrated, Nietzsche abruptly introduces a reference to Plato's courteous but firm expulsion of the imitative or dramatic artist from the Republic. The note is a discordant one, not only unessential to the argument but actually in conflict with some of it. Yet Nietzsche introduces it both in the preliminary sketch and in the essay itself. One would need to be a Plato, he says, to dismiss such a deceiver from the community,

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, § 7, p. 285.

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

and we are not ready to do this. There may be a state of society, he goes on, where the dramatic artist is unnecessary, but we have not reached it yet. Wagner, therefore, is necessary to us. In the essay Nietzsche says little more than this on the point ; but his meaning is clear. His brief, almost unrelated, statement is like the death's-head at the feast. When he has in his analysis brought Wagner to the pinnacle of his power, he virtually adds : There is something beyond Wagner, beyond him even at his best, something greater, simpler, truer than he ; and if we were thoroughly healthy we should not need Wagner. Nietzsche does not say what it is that lies beyond, but he implies that it is something more heroic than the life-weariness which, among other motives, seems to pervade much of Wagner's art. And there can be little doubt that Nietzsche was beginning at least to suspect who might become the prophet of this new and greater gospel.

Thirdly, there is still another source of discord active in the essay : Nietzsche has lost his own faith. If we consider the scene as Nietzsche sets it before us, we find much that has appeared before, most of the old stage properties. The attack on current thought and art is there ; so too is the glorification of Greek culture, the unity and ultimate simplicity of which contrasts with the patchwork complexity of modern life. The attack on history and its professors, on music and musicians, with the partial exception of Beethoven, the disparagement of thought and the insistence on the superiority of correct immediate feeling : these are all there. And further, the need for the development of this feeling by music, so that out of music may come tragic drama, all this is still present. But one thing is missing, and that thing had once been fundamental to Nietzsche ; the metaphysical basis has gone.

We have already considered at some length the metaphysical conception which underlies Nietzsche's theory in *The Birth of Tragedy*. His whole view of the redemption of life by art is based on it, and from it comes the sole justification he attempts to give for his evaluation of Greek civilisation. If it disappears — and it has disappeared — Nietzsche must find a new basis by

## NIETZSCHE

which his building may be supported, or that building will come down in ruins upon him. In this essay no such new basis is provided ; the result, intellectually and to some extent artistically, is an incoherence and even a collapse. The whole essay cannot be traversed now from this point of view, but consideration of one part, itself a critical one, will suffice for our purpose. The end and climax of section 7 is the description of the evolution of the dithyrambic artist, identified, of course, with Wagner. Much of the discussion might belong to *The Birth of Tragedy* and even the language at times seems to be borrowed from that source. But there is a difference. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche declared that it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world can appear justified. And he believed that the world is so justified ; for behind the Dionysian phenomena of art there is Dionysus himself, the ultimate reality, with which in tragic art we identify ourselves, obtaining thus as our own the satisfaction which Dionysus finds in the playful creation and endless transformation of the world. In the essay this belief has disappeared, the tragic artist consequently falls from his high estate, becoming ultimately little more than an illusionist, necessary to us on account of our weakness, but by no means a guide to the nature and heart of things. " Art, of course, is no teacher or school-mistress for immediate action : the artist is never a teacher or counsellor in this sense ; the objects for which the tragic hero strives are not as they stand things inherently worth striving for. As in a dream, the valuation of things is altered so long as we feel ourselves under the influence of art. What we hold for the time being to be so worthy of striving for that we agree with the tragic hero when he prefers to die rather than give it up — this is seldom worthy of a like value and a like energy in real life : that is why art is just the activity of one who is resting." Life is infinitely complex, and the complexity of it puts a strain on us which we can hardly bear. In the field of art everything is simplified, and the strain is lessened. " Art is there," says Nietzsche, "*that the bow may not break.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, § 4, p. 270.

## WAGNER AT BAYREUTH

It is clear from this and similar passages that the justification which set the dithyrambic artist at the pinnacle of things has gone, and he must submit to taking a lowlier and perhaps only temporary place in civilisation. But with him goes also the meaning of the universe, at least the meaning of it as Nietzsche used to understand it and as Wagner is supposed to present it. Nietzsche still dresses Wagner in the old garments, and allows him to call upon the spirit of Dionysus ; but the music and the dance, however much they excite and recreate the spectator, fail of their ultimate object. The trappings of the priest of Dionysus are there, but Dionysus himself is dead.

Nietzsche believed that he had gone beyond Wagner. What lay in the new country into which he was penetrating he was not yet sure, but it was something which Wagner, in spite of all his strength and ability, could not give, and perhaps could not even rightly understand. The end of the essay should probably be read from this point of view. At the beginning of the eleventh section Nietzsche speaks of the new world to which Wagner's art may lead, and which will be simpler, more natural and more straightforward than that in which we live. Then he mentions in turn the themes of Wagner's drama, asking the reader to consider how far they are natural and in accordance with a correct feeling for life. The list is rather artificially presented, and the question somewhat rhetorical ; but the end is significant. The end is *The Ring*, and in *The Ring* the renunciation of power by Wotan. Wagner himself had been dubbed Wotan in the affectionate speech of his intimate circle, and Nietzsche was recognised as a spiritual Siegfried : the symbolism therefore is obvious. Nietzsche, himself Siegfried, holds up for admiration and as an example to be copied the behaviour of the old vanquished king of the gods as he comes at last to rejoice in his own defeat, and to follow with sympathy and anxiety the course of the young hero to whom he owes his overthrow. " Full of sympathy for the joy and suffering of his conqueror," the man who had broken his spear, the god looks back on the course of

## NIETZSCHE

events, and in his renunciation becomes "free in love, free from himself".<sup>1</sup>

Wagner, if he read at all carefully, could hardly mistake the meaning. But lest he should do so, Nietzsche closes with something plainer still, a final barbed sting in the tail. When Wagner finds a people who understand him, Nietzsche asks, what will he be to them? And the answer is: "Something, which he cannot be to us all, that is to say, not the Seer of a future, as he would perhaps like to appear to us, but the interpreter and transfigurer of a past".

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. vii, § 11, p. 332.

## XVI

### ALIENATION

NIETZSCHE sent two copies of his essay on Wagner to Bayreuth, one to Cosima and one to Wagner himself, writing an accompanying letter to each. To Cosima Nietzsche was not altogether ingenuous. He says of the essay : “. . . You will discover from it that I could not endure preparing myself in such a solitary fashion for the great and vast event of this summer, and that I had to communicate my joy to others. If I might only hope to have guessed a note of your joy and to have expressed it with you ! I could not know anything finer to wish for.”<sup>1</sup>

Cosima, we are told, sat up half the night reading the essay and telegraphed her thanks next morning. In face of Wagner himself, however, Nietzsche was more diffident, indeed half checkily afraid. He began by saying that his article must have increased the joy of the ordinary Wagnerian, and then continued : “How you yourself will receive these confessions, I cannot at all guess this time. My literary work involves the unpleasant result for me that each time I have published a writing something or other in my personal relationships has been brought in question, and can only be put back into its place again by the exercise of humour. How far I feel this to-day, in a quite special way, I may not express more clearly. When I consider what I have ventured to do this time, I get giddy and my heart sinks, and my fate will be that of the rider on Lake Constance. But in your very first letter to me you said something about faith in *German freedom* : I turn to that faith to-day : as only from it was I able to find the courage to do what I have done.” In the light of our discussion this letter requires no comment. But Wagner did not know the mental changes through which Nietzsche had

<sup>1</sup> July 1876 ; *Wagner und Nietzsche*, p. 240.



## NIETZSCHE

been going during the previous two years ; moreover, he was excessively preoccupied and almost overwhelmed with work of all kinds. No doubt he had time to skim through the book rapidly, noting the passages of skilful character analysis and the apparently glowing praise, but it is less likely that he had time or attention to give to the subtleties of the treatment. He probably wondered what Nietzsche was so nervous about, so he dashed off a hearty reply : " Friend, your book is immense. But where did you get the knowledge of me ? Only come soon and get accustomed to the impressions by means of the rehearsals." This, it may be remarked, was Wagner's last letter to Nietzsche.

All, apparently, was well then. Wagner had not taken offence, and probably did not even know there was anything to take offence at. So Nietzsche prepared to go to Bayreuth, and, as Wagner had suggested, he set out early, in time for some of the preliminary rehearsals, leaving his sister to pack up and follow him.

He had already arranged to go on sick leave. Earlier in the year the burden of his ill-health had so oppressed him that he asked for a year's leave of absence. The University granted it on generous terms, and it was due to begin officially in October 1876, when the new term opened. But the ill-health did not vanish at the prospect of the holiday, and Nietzsche brought it with him to Bayreuth. He wrote to his sister on Tuesday, 1st August, a day or two after he arrived, saying that he was almost sorry he had come and that everything was miserable. " From Sunday midday till Monday night headaches, to-day exhaustion. I can hardly lift my pen. On Monday I was at the rehearsal, I did not like it at all and had to come out."

In Bayreuth, until his sister was expected, Nietzsche stayed with a benevolent elderly lady, Miss Malwida von Meysenbug, who from now on played at times a considerable part in his affairs, and to whom he was often indebted for sympathy, help and kindness, when he had need of it. From her at this time he received care and comfort ; he was allowed to seclude himself

## ALIENATION

in her house and garden, and, almost hiding there, he refused all invitations, even those of the Wagners.

By the end of the week he could endure his distresses no longer. "Persistent headache," he wrote to his sister on the Saturday morning, "though not yet of the worst kind. Yesterday I could only listen along with the others to *The Valkyries* in a dark room; all seeing impossible. I long to get away, my staying is absurd. I dread each of these long art-evenings, and yet I do not stay away."<sup>1</sup>

The physical pain, combined with the conflict, intellectual, aesthetic and personal, at length overcame him: he left Bayreuth abruptly that Saturday afternoon, and when his sister arrived at Miss von Meysenbug's next day, he was gone. He had retreated to the woods of the Fichtel Mountains, and he spent ten days in their leafy shade, sometimes wandering in the forest, and sometimes working at a new book, to be called *The Ploughshare*, in which his new conception of life was to be set forth. He wrote to his sister that he would not return to Bayreuth; "for that", he said, "I have not enough money".<sup>2</sup> But he changed his mind when his health improved, and he came back to Bayreuth the day before the performance began. The cycle of *The Ring* was to be performed three times, and Nietzsche attended the first cycle. But he gave away the tickets which he and his sister had for the second one; so that he remained at Bayreuth during this second set of performances without hearing any of them.

Nor did he see much of the busy Wagner. The avoidance, however, was entirely on Nietzsche's side. "My brother", wrote his sister, "had not the slightest occasion to feel hurt. In fact, Wagner continually took the greatest trouble to give him honour and distinction in every regard; but Fritz avoided those honourings when he could, this loud noisy praise of Wagner's was abhorrent to him."<sup>3</sup> In the circumstances any praise must have touched a sensitive nerve. Before the end of the month Nietzsche returned to Basle to stay in the vacant house of a

<sup>1</sup> 5th Aug. 1876.

<sup>2</sup> 6th Aug. 1876.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Nietzsche*, p. 432.

## NIETZSCHE

friend until his official leave began. His sister did not accompany him, and as they parted, Nietzsche said to her with tears in his eyes, "Oh, Lizzie, that was Bayreuth."

In October Nietzsche went south, and towards the end of the month he was established in a house belonging to Miss von Meysenbug at Sorrento, near Naples. In addition to the hostess there were two others there, a Dr. Paul Rée, on whose friendship Nietzsche greatly relied at the moment, and a young disciple and novelist, Albert Brenner.

To his surprise, and probably to his dismay, Nietzsche found that the Wagners were also staying at Sorrento, indeed close at hand. But however awkward Nietzsche may have felt, Wagner was genial, cheerful, unsuspecting, and liberal of discussion as of old. Indeed at times Nietzsche found the vigour and vivacity disturbing and almost overpowering. Moreover, he felt the strain of the partially suppressed clash of opinion and outlook. Late one afternoon towards the end of Wagner's stay, the two men were walking near the shore, and Wagner began to speak of *Parsifal*, the work on which he was then engaged. Throwing himself into the spirit of it in the dramatic way which Nietzsche knew so well and had once praised as a source of Wagner's strength, Wagner spoke of it not as merely a *tour de force* or an artistic trick, but as the embodiment of vital experience, and dwelt on the Christian attitudes and emotions in his own life — repentance, atonement, the feeling of communion — which he was making part of the living tissue of his drama. As Wagner talked, the light began to fade and a slight mist blew in from the sea. Nietzsche walked along mute, embarrassed, almost confounded, until Wagner noticed his stony silence. Then, with an excuse, Nietzsche slipped away into the growing dark, depressed and alone. He never saw Wagner again.

Nietzsche stayed at Sorrento till May 1877, finding there congenial company, a favourable climate, and in many respects a suitable mode of life. The other inmates of the house were greatly under his influence and paid due respect to his ideas and to his personality. Moreover, although they afforded him

## ALIENATION

comradeship, they did not thrust themselves upon him, for each of them was writing a book ; Malwida reminiscences, Rée, a philosophical treatise, and Brenner a novel. Nietzsche without discourtesy could find as much time as he desired for his own work ; and indeed he obtained some assistance, for, at times, Brenner wrote to his dictation. The relief which Nietzsche obtained during these months from academic duties and from outside contacts led to the revival of an idea with which he and his sister had toyed before, viz. that of a monastery for kindred free-thinking souls, where the members might commune with one another and with themselves as they pleased, and become true upholders and preservers of culture. The idea came to nothing, although it made an appeal to Nietzsche and led him to write to his sister : " The ' school of educators ' (also called the modern cloister, ideal colony, *université libre*) is in the air, who knows what may happen ! In our minds we have appointed you to supervise all the domestic affairs of our institute of 40 persons."<sup>1</sup>

Malwida, however, had what she regarded as a more practical idea ; Nietzsche must marry a wealthy but obedient wife, one whose money would free him from the strain of academic teaching, and whose humble but intelligent adoration would give balm to his soul. Nietzsche's sister was asked to help in the difficult process of finding the right person, for although Nietzsche took the idea seriously, he was difficult to please. In April 1876, as we have already seen, he had attempted to solve the problem for himself by proposing marriage to a young lady on the strength of a very short acquaintanceship, being apparently encouraged in his purpose by her interest in Longfellow's *Excelsior*. But the venture had been unsuccessful and now when he considered the list of eligible ladies, none seemed quite suitable. " Don't you think ", he wrote to his sister in March 1877, " that after six weeks I should not be able to stand Miss X. any longer and could not hear or see her any more. . . . They speak to me here of Miss N. ; what do you think ? But yet she is 30 years old :

<sup>1</sup> 20th Jan. 1877.

## NIETZSCHE

it would be better if she were 12 years younger. Otherwise her nature and mind might suit me very well." In April marriage still seemed to him a way out of his difficulties. "We are convinced", he said, speaking for the group at Sorrento, but chiefly for Miss von Meysenbug and himself, "that my existence at Basle University cannot continue for long, that at best I could go on with it at the expense of all my more important projects, and in addition with the total sacrifice of my health. Of course, I shall have to spend the next winter there in that situation, but at Easter 1878 there is to be an end of it, provided the other combination comes off, *i.e.* marrying a suitable, but necessarily wealthy, wife. 'Good but rich' as Miss von Meysenbug says, and over this 'but' we laugh heartily. With her I would then live during the coming years in Rome, a place fit alike for health, company and my studies. During this summer the project is to be pushed forward, in Switzerland, so that I may arrive in the autumn at Basle as a married man. In respect of mental qualities I still think Miss N. most suitable. You have done a great deal to eulogise little Y. of Geneva. Praise, honour and glory. But still I have doubts."<sup>1</sup> In June the idea is still there, but it has grown fainter. "Marrying, very desirable it is true — is nevertheless a most unlikely thing, that I know very clearly."<sup>2</sup> After this nothing more is heard of the matter.

The change to Sorrento made at first a great impression on Nietzsche and soon after his arrival he recorded his feelings. "I do not have strength enough for the North; that is the domain of heavy and artificial souls, who work as steadily and necessarily at rules of prudence as a beaver at his dam. Among them I have passed my whole youth! When for the first time I saw the evening come up over Naples with its satin grey and red in the sky, this thought suddenly overwhelmed me; you might have died without seeing this. A shudder, pity for myself that I was beginning my life by being old, and tears and the feeling of still being saved at the last moment. I have spirit enough for the South."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 25th April 1877.

<sup>2</sup> 2nd June 1877.

<sup>3</sup> Beginning of Nov. 1876.

## ALIENATION

But the ill-health which had driven him from Switzerland did not leave him in Italy, and within a few days he was writing to his sister : " An evil which has dragged along for years does not go so quickly ". And then follows a note which is repeated again and again in his correspondence : " Two more days in bed, and after that other bad days ".<sup>1</sup> Constantly recurring headache laid him on his back, sometimes for several days, and even between the violent attacks he was seldom free from distress of some kind. His eyes could give him only limited service and he constantly over-taxed them, with unhappy results.

When he returned to Switzerland in May 1877, he spent most of the time before the next semester at Rosenlauibad, near Meiringen. Here his health improved a little, though not greatly, and he repeatedly expressed his dread of the coming winter at Basle. He began to consider seriously the idea of resigning his Chair, and some of his friends urged him to follow this course. Rohde, however, advised him to remain at his post ; and he himself, while he feared the strain and vented his feelings on this " cursed philology ", clung at times as firmly as he could to his one real anchorage in the world. For the moment, therefore, the matter was left unsettled.

During the previous year or two Nietzsche had made some new friends. Some of these have already been mentioned, notably Miss von Meysenbug and Paul Rée. Another and even more important one was a young musician, Heinrich Köselitz, better known by his nickname of Peter Gast. Gast came to Basle to make Nietzsche's acquaintance and was so impressed by him that he remained to worship. Nor was the influence exerted on him a transitory one : he remained a most devoted admirer throughout the rest of Nietzsche's life. Nietzsche in turn was impressed by Gast's musical abilities, and when Gast, who wrote a most beautiful hand, placed his penmanship fully at Nietzsche's service, both for dictation and for copying manuscript for the press, he became indispensable. But important as

<sup>1</sup> 20th Jan. 1877.

## NIETZSCHE

these gains were, there were losses which more than counter-balanced them. The greatest friend of all, Wagner, was gone. And although no one yet suspected it, Rohde was beginning to drift away. In reverence and affection he remained the same, or thought he did, but having become a professor at Jena and married a young wife, his outlook was changing, and, moreover, he was quite unaware of the change through which Nietzsche had recently been going. From this time onward personal contact between the two men was very infrequent and correspondence languished.

Almost as important, and more abrupt, was a breach with Gersdorff. Through Malwida von Meysenbug Gersdorff had come to know a young Italian girl, with whom he fell in love and whom he wished to marry. She came of a good family, and although it had to some extent come down in the world's eyes, Gersdorff was willing to accept it. His parents, however, objected, and a complicated wrangle ensued in which Malwida became the target for some of Gersdorff's criticism. Nietzsche then interfered, and in an extremely injudicious letter, eight pages long, he lectured Gersdorff, contriving at once to defend Malwida, to reflect adversely on Gersdorff's fiancée, and advise Gersdorff in forcible language against what he deemed an unsuitable match. Gersdorff was so annoyed with Nietzsche's well-meant presumption that he broke off communication with him and held aloof for almost six years.

In the autumn Nietzsche resumed his duties at Basle, remaining in moderately good health till the turn of the year. Then he had a relapse, followed by a recovery, followed by another relapse; and he continued to fluctuate in this painful fashion through the spring and summer of 1878. In the early autumn his sister left him, partly because of her antagonism to the philosophical views which he was now developing, and after a brief search for health in the Bernese Oberland, he spent the winter in a small cottage a short distance out of Basle in a solitary and miserable condition. His letters at this time are one long record of physical distress. To make matters worse he began to diet himself, adding semi-

## ALIENATION

starvation to his other ills. At length in the spring of 1879 he broke down altogether, and at the beginning of May sent an appeal through Overbeck to his sister for help. She came at once, and finding him greatly changed and quite unfit for academic duties, took him off to a place near Berne where he might rest.

Meanwhile Nietzsche had resigned his Chair at Basle, and the University, which he had served for ten years, and which in spite of misgivings recognised his brilliance and was grateful for his services, accepted his resignation with regret. He was awarded a pension, which with a contribution from the Government, yielded him 3000 francs a year.

After three weeks in the neighbourhood of Berne, where his sister had to leave him, Nietzsche went to Wiesen and from there to St. Moritz in the Engadine. Here his spirits began to rise, and soon after his arrival in the later part of June he wrote :  
". . . Perhaps St. Moritz after all is the right thing for me. It seems to me as if I were in the Promised Land. . . . For the first time a feeling of alleviation. I live entirely by myself and have my meals in my room (as in Basle, and almost the same things, only no figs), almost no meat : but much milk. It suits me. I will stay here a long time."<sup>1</sup> A fortnight later he still approves. "Nevertheless St. Moritz is the right thing for me. I am often ill, have already been four days in bed, and every day has its tale of misery, and nevertheless ! I endure it better than elsewhere. It seems to me as if I had long sought and at length found. Of improvement I do not think any more at all, not to speak of recovery. But the ability to endure is very great. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

But he was still at times depressed. At the end of August he told his sister : "I am not writing, things do not go at all well. Friend Overbeck came here in a state of concern, and truly he did not take a comforting impression away with him. I do not know what I shall do in the winter, I am so tired of everything. Perhaps I shall come to you in September. I am sick of walking about so much (I spend eight hours a day in the

<sup>1</sup> 24th June 1879.

<sup>2</sup> 6th July 1879.



open) ; my eyes want the twilight ; and then I am read to so much, in order that I may not be for ever meditating — the only thing to occupy me besides my eternal pain. Read I cannot, talk to people I cannot, the landscape I know by heart, and it no longer draws my eye. But the air is far too good, I dread leaving it."

Towards the middle of September he left St. Moritz to meet his sister at Chur. But before his departure he wrote a letter to Peter Gast, full of brooding, and showing by its allusive religious tone how greatly his mind was occupied with the sacred things of his youth, and recalling not only Dante and the Platonic Socrates, but also the mediæval Church, Luther, the Psalmist and the Christ of the Gospels. Behind the thought of it, too, there is a reference to his father, and perhaps a self-identification with him. "I am at the end of the 35th year of my life ; the 'midst of life' they have called this time for the last fifteen hundred years ; it was then that Dante had his vision and speaks in the first words of his poem about it. Now in the midst of life I am so 'encompassed by death', that it may seize me at any hour ; from the nature of my suffering I must think of a sudden death, through convulsions (although I should prefer a hundred times a slow one, with a clear intellect, in which one could talk to one's friends, even if it were more painful). In this respect I feel myself now like a very old man ; and in the respect also, that I *have done* my life's work. I have poured out a good drop of oil, that I know, and it will not be forgotten of me. In principle I have already given a proof of my view of life : many will still give it. Up till this moment my mind has not been depressed by my ceaseless and painful suffering, at times it seems to me even as if my feelings were more cheerful and benevolent than in all my earlier life : to whom have I to attribute this strengthening and improving result ? Not to men, for with very few exceptions, in recent years they have all been 'offended because of me', and did not hesitate to show it." "Renunciation in everything", he exclaimed a few lines later, "(—I lacked friends and all intercourse, I could not read books ; all art was

## ALIENATION

far from me . . .) — this renunciation was complete, except in one point ; I gave myself up to my thoughts — what I had yet to do ! — But this beyond doubt is the most harmful thing of all for my head — and yet I do not know how I could have avoided it.”<sup>1</sup>

At Chur his sister found him much better, at least in appearance, and her enthusiastic surprise helped to make him think, if not of a cure, at least of an alleviation of his condition. But for the moment the hope was slight, and in his weary despondency, his home and the associations of his youth came before his mind with almost irresistible force. His course was run, he thought, and as the cycle of it closed, he yearned for the peace and shelter of its beginning. As he put it rather stiltedly to Peter Gast in the letter just quoted, he found himself in a state where it seemed more appropriate for him to betake himself to the neighbourhood of his mother, his home and his childish memories. So on 20th September he went to Naumburg.

Nietzsche now resolved in his old home to return to simpler things, to dismiss the high problems of destiny and morals from his mind, for a time at least, and in the literal sense to cultivate his garden. “ Here in Naumburg ”, he wrote to Gast about a ten days after his arrival, “ I *will* have no thoughts, and in any event will not write them down.” Near his mother’s house on the mediaeval city wall there was an old guard-room which took Nietzsche’s fancy. He rented it for his own use for a period of six years, as well as an adjoining piece of land on which he proposed to grow fruit, flowers and vegetables. “ I have ten fruit trees,” he wrote, “ roses, lilies, carnations, strawberries, gooseberries and currants. In the spring my work will be extended to 10 beds of vegetables. It is all my own idea, and gives me great pleasure.”<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche’s sister was not at home at this time, and so he was alone with his mother. She in her simple piety was completely out of touch with his thought, and she urged him to give up writing on those dangerous topics which disturbed his mind

<sup>1</sup> 11th Sept. 1879.

<sup>2</sup> 30th Sept. 1879.

## NIETZSCHE

and lost him his friends. Partly to please her, and partly to get away from his own unsettling and unsettled philosophy, he returned for a little time to "his Greeks", as his mother put it, and to her no small satisfaction he dictated to her short passages about the ancient philosophers.

But Nietzsche's heart was not in it. The gardening soon lapsed, the Greeks were recommitted to oblivion, and Nietzsche was once again alone with his unsolved problems. "My loneliness, my illness," he wrote to Gast at the beginning of October, "has to some extent accustomed me to the 'imprudence' of my writing. But *others* must do *everything* better, my *life* as well as my *thinking*." In the meantime he felt that he had given everything up. "You will not believe", he told Gast, "how faithfully I have carried out the programme of thoughtlessness, and I have reason to be faithful here, for 'behind thinking there stands the devil' of a raging attack of pain." But even attempted thoughtlessness could not save him: his health deteriorated and his spirits sank. Towards the end of December he wrote to his sister: "The times are as hard and frightful for me as they have ever been. The last attack with three days' dysentery, yesterday faint. I have never seen such a regular deterioration as in the last three months." And on 31st December he said: "The year draws to an end, the most dreadful one of my life"; but he added — and the addition is in character — "even if it should be my last, I shall depart without bitterness and unbowed". A fortnight later he cried to her: "Why did I come to this terrible gloomy North? How my health has declined since the good happy days at Chur — in spite of the attentive care of our dear mother."

The return home had been a failure, so in February 1880 Nietzsche set out again and in March reached Venice to begin a new phase of his life.

During the period which we have been considering, from Nietzsche's last visit to Bayreuth in 1876 until his arrival in Naumburg in 1879, he did not cease to write. Unable to remain long at his desk or to compose in the old manner, he jotted down

## ALIENATION

copious notes, which were later transcribed ; and in this way he gradually amassed a large reserve of material on which he could draw. In August 1877, when he returned to Basle after his year's leave of absence, he gathered many of these notes together into a volume, which, having been revised and extended, was copied by Peter Gast and sent to the printer in January 1878. The book appeared at the beginning of May, under the title of *Human all too Human*, with a dedication to Voltaire. It was followed by two appendices, drawn from the same source and amplified in the same way. The first of these, *Mixed Opinions and Aphorisms*, went to press in January 1879, appearing a month later ; the second, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, worked up in the spring and summer of 1879, was sent to Peter Gast to be copied just before Nietzsche left St. Moritz on his way to Naumburg in September. It appeared at the end of the year. When these writings were reprinted in 1886 Nietzsche combined the two appendices and issued them as a second volume of *Human all too Human*.

## XVII

### HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

HOWEVER ill-adjusted Nietzsche was to the world and however much he failed to get into touch with his fellow men and reach an adequate, not to say dominating, position among them, he never despaired and he was never a genuine pessimist. Even when he was most under the influence of Schopenhauer and professed to regard life as a little worse than nothing, he nevertheless contrived to stand aloof from its woes, to look at them from above, and to feel that in him there was something of immeasurable value, in virtue of which some degree of worth was restored to things. Professing pessimists, Nietzsche began to see, find a satisfaction in their pessimism; they "are clever people whose stomachs are out of order; they take revenge with their heads for their bad digestions". "Over-sensitive, unhappy people, like Leopardi, who proudly take revenge for their pain on the whole of existence, do not realise how the divine procurer of existence laughs at them as they do so; at that very moment they are drinking again from his mixing bowl; for their revenge, their pride, their tendency to think of what they suffer and their art of saying it — is not all that again — pure honey?"<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche mentions Leopardi, but he is thinking equally of himself.

We have already considered the way in which in his earlier years, during the first period of his independent thought which culminated in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche struggled towards a view of things which would satisfy his soul, even towards an optimism of his own. From a moral point of view, that is to say, judged by moral standards, the world is the unsatisfactory place which Schopenhauer supposed it to be. Justice in any real

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. ix, p. 375.

## HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

sense does not exist in the world, and it is vain to expect it there : even the highest things in life are based on error and illusion, and the preservation of them demands a ruthless denial of the kindly but sentimental virtues which society professes to revere. But although the origin of the world is not to be sought in a moral being, it may be due to an artist-creator who invests tragedy with beauty and finds delight in non-moral power. "I believed", he says of his earlier view, "that from the aesthetic point of view the world was a play and was intended as such by its poet-maker ; but that as a moral phenomenon it was a deceit ; so I came to the conclusion that the world could be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon."<sup>1</sup> It is important to realise here that for Nietzsche the world was so justified, and that accordingly, as he himself came later to perceive, at an age when other passions more commonly filled men's minds he "fell in love with art with true passion and at last saw nothing but art in all that exists".

But at the period which we have now reached his view has changed. The metaphysical justification for art has disappeared and art itself has fallen from its high estate. Art, of course, is still of value, but the world is no longer justified by it. It is clear from the account which has already been given that the motive for the change was a complex one. "I have written my writings every time", he remarked a little later and looking back, "with my whole body and life : I do not know what purely mental problems are."<sup>2</sup> And as his body and life changed so did both his problem and his solution of it. The art in which Nietzsche found, or tried to find, the consolation he desired was Dionysian and not Apollonian ; the ecstasy of the revel was essential to it. But this ecstasy, although it may arise from a deficiency which finds ordinary life empty and unsatisfying, implies a large measure of strength, a vitality and vigour, which, although frustrated in everyday existence, is nevertheless abundant and clamant. This strength and vigour Nietzsche had in his youth, and the possession of it enabled him to project himself in imagina-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* vol. xxi, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 81.

## NIETZSCHE

tion into the Dionysian revel, although in reality he remained far from it. But the years of sickness had taken toll of him, and as his vitality abated the wild intoxication of his former dreams began to seem alien. His soul no longer craved for this extraordinary outlet of pent-up strength, but rather for a serenity which could be maintained in and against weakness. And when the Dionysian satisfaction disappeared art fell back to a lower level, for its claim now rested only on its Apollonian form.

But as the old satisfaction disappeared, another had to be put in its place. If the world is not justified by art, it must be justified in some other way. This is a cardinal principle of Nietzsche's thought from first to last, a demand essential to his temperament, and he can only be understood in the light of it. We have therefore to consider how this principle is carried out in the period with which we are now concerned. But before we do so, we have to consider the view of the world and of man which he put forth : only then can we understand the way in which he attempted to derive satisfaction from that view.

In one sense the originality to be found in *Human all too Human* lies in its general spirit rather than in specific philosophic principle. Nietzsche's earlier writing, however positive he attempted to render his view by means of his Dionysian interpretation of life, had a marked negative aspect, and rejected many traditional interpretations and values ; in particular, in setting Dionysus up, it put Christianity down. This negative attitude was not of artistic but of intellectual origin, and derived from the sceptical attitude to religion, and to some aspects of philosophy, which has been called the Enlightenment, and which showed itself historically in the teaching of the Encyclopedists in France, in Voltaire, in Comte, and in English empirical philosophy, which was strongly entrenched both in France and England at the time when Nietzsche wrote. In his Dionysian phase Nietzsche assumed the results of this movement, but in taking them for granted he did not stress them or give them any particular positive importance. Thus, as we have seen, he attacked Strauss, who had much of the spirit of the Enlightenment in

## HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

him, and who gave Nietzsche some of the intellectual grounds by which his revolt against his childish faith was justified in his own mind ; and the attack, which fundamentally was directed against the optimism of the Enlightenment, was not in any way mitigated, and may even have been intensified by Nietzsche's consciousness of his debt to Strauss. But now Nietzsche was forced back on to the Enlightenment itself, and the critical rationalistic attitude which marked it seemed almost all that was left to him. To its rationalism, however, the Enlightenment had added an optimistic view of life : reason was to rule, superstition was to be banished, and the golden age was perhaps not too far off. And Nietzsche under the general influence of the Enlightenment adopted some of its optimism.

But he did so with a difference. He could not go back to the naïve faith in the omnipotence of a pure, and perhaps very incomplete, reason to dominate and regenerate the world ; he was no longer young enough or vital enough to take such a point of view. The only optimism of which he was capable was a sober subdued one, capable of being maintained through illness and preached between bouts of pain. Thus it is not surprising that Nietzsche shows strongly the influence of another movement of thought, akin to that of the Enlightenment but differing from it by reason of its cynical temper. The ethical theory proper to the Enlightenment was some form of Hedonism, and the practical application to which this Hedonistic doctrine led was that by a sound regulation of rewards and punishments life and conduct could be brought to a high degree of perfection. But Hedonism does not always take this form : and many of those who have accepted it have made it a cover for a profound and sometimes even despairing criticism of human nature. Nietzsche was influenced by writers of this school, particularly by the group of French moralisers extending from Montaigne through La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère and Chamfort to Stendhal. They form an interesting group, differing in many ways, in creed and temperament ; but in addition to their actual views they had one feature in common — they were all men apart, out of the



main stream of life, onlookers and not doers. And when they accepted the doctrine that man is always self-centred, a seeker of pleasure, and dominated by self-love, they gave it a twist whereby self-love becomes almost indistinguishable from selfishness. All professedly altruistic ideals and modes of behaviour thus become disguises whereby self-love covers itself up and hides its unpleasing face.

Paul Rée, Nietzsche's new friend, had written a book entitled *Psychological Observations* in which this point of view was set forth, and as it fell in exactly with Nietzsche's humour at the moment, he praised it loudly and hailed its acumen and wisdom. It was by no means a remarkable book, and the doctrine which it set forth — the supremacy of self-love — had been expounded by wittier and more profound writers. Why then did the book, and why did the doctrine itself, make such an appeal to Nietzsche? His own account of the situation is of interest.

He first confesses his *naïveté*; the point of view, he says, was new to him, and in his Dionysian or metaphysical period he had not realised it. Secondly, when he came to look at it he found, or thought he found, that he could verify it time and again in behaviour. Behaviour with its motives was not to be taken at its face value, and Nietzsche felt joy in his own acuteness in seeing beneath the surface and unmasking life. Thirdly, he now felt himself impressed by the honesty and candour of his thought and a member of the noble band of thinkers who are resolved to see and tell the truth however unpleasing it may be. Fourthly, and as a development of this, he felt that in abandoning idealism and what he now felt to be the language of mere youthful enthusiasm, he was adopting the manner of speech befitting a man. Lastly, he says, it made him feel more able to cope with life by rejecting false standards, and thus gave him courage.

This analysis of his mind is true, so far as it goes. But it does not go the whole way. It has been pointed out above that the guides whom Nietzsche was following were all men apart from the main stream of life, men who had no real function in it, and who in varying degree felt the futility not only of the world

## HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

but also of themselves within it. Montaigne, in a time when religious belief, strife and persecution seemed to most men to give the substance of things, stood aloof from parties, and with a refined and tolerant scepticism took refuge in a literary neo-classicism. La Rochefoucauld, a Duke at a time when the régime to which Dukes belonged was giving way before the growing central power of the monarchy, played a small and almost dilettante part in that most insane of all risings, the Fronde. La Bruyère, the gentleman usher of the Condés, at a time when they too and nearly all they stood for were being superseded, was a tolerated onlooker on life, studying the gilded salon from the doorway, but hardly allowed to step on to its floor. Chamfort, with the stamp of illegitimacy in his heart, was a profligate who found no real satisfaction in the society to which he precariously clung, and who, when in the end he turned from it to the people, received his death-blow from them. All these men, able and sensitive in their manner and degree, stood in large measure outside life, puzzled or rebuffed by it, and in their hearts were touched by a feeling of inferiority, all the more powerful because it was not always confessed. And so having a power over words which they did not have over things, they revenged themselves by their words. Whether their doctrine was tolerant or bitter, there was a cynicism behind it, a denial of values, a lessening or human nature, a scorn of idealism and enthusiasm, and an insistence on the petty and sometimes ignoble character of human motives. The inferiority they felt was transferred by them to the world which aroused that feeling in them.

Nietzsche too felt inferior. We have seen how he clung to his post in Basle, unsatisfactory as he found it to be, and relinquished it only when further continuance in it was impossible. But now he had lost that, and he had no place in things. He was mentally as well as physically homeless, merely a boarder in the dwelling-house of life; and so, when he looked at his fellow guests, he tried to see behind their busy hearty gaiety an isolation like his own, and he delighted to trace self-centred elements in all actions and motives. They too, he congratulated himself,

## NIETZSCHE

were really alone, as he was ; but they were bound by delusion, whereas he was free.

Thus *Human all too Human* is described as a book for Free Spirits, and it is intended to free men from superstition and idealism. There is no metaphysical world, no reality hidden behind the surface of things, no giver of law to which man is responsible : there is only this world, there is nothing beyond. And in this world everything happens by inexorable necessity, so that even in human behaviour there is ultimately no real choice or freedom ; all happens of necessity and man, with all he does, is the product of forces he cannot control. Responsibility thus, Nietzsche contends, is ultimately meaningless ; the man whom society calls a wrongdoer is merely the victim of circumstances, and when society punishes him there is no ethical justification for its action.

Nietzsche, however, found it difficult to be a rationalist, and his doctrine wavers. He was hampered in two ways. On the one hand, he retained a confused recollection, perhaps one might say, a ghost, of the Kantian doctrine of the thing-in-itself, and on the other, he had not sufficient faith in the efficacy of reason to rely on it fully for all men and all life.

Although he was influenced by Kant, largely at second-hand, Nietzsche never mastered his teaching, and thus although he could deviate from him, he was not well placed to advance beyond him. Kant's thing-in-itself, if it exists, is unknown ; to reach it, the mind would have to give up all the means by which alone knowledge in the strict sense is possible. Hence it cannot be reached by the understanding. But it is impossible to do without it, for a merely phenomenal world with no reality behind it seems absurd. For Nietzsche there is also a thing-in-itself, but it is known ; it is the world as it appeared to pure science, stripped of all the accretions of colour, sound, beauty, superstition and value, which the human mind had added to it. The world as it appears to us, the phenomenal world, is not wholly real and in many respects is false and unreal. But, Nietzsche argues, the metaphysicians who say that we have to give up reason to attain

## HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

reality and that there is an irretrievable gap between knowledge and being, are equally at fault with those who accept all our prejudices and superstitions as ultimate truths. The mind has misinterpreted reality, has read qualities into it which it does not have, and filled it with "meaning". But reality itself has no "meaning", it is a mere interplay of physical forces, to which science, if we will follow its lead, can take us back. But prejudice and instinct are strong and liberation is not easy. "That which we now call the world", he says, "is the result of a mass of errors and fantasies which have arisen gradually in the total development of organic being, have grown into one another, and have now been inherited by us as the accumulated treasure of the whole past — as treasure; for the value of our humanness depends on it. From this world of our imagination strict science can in fact only liberate us to a small extent — and moreover it is not at all to be wished that it should — inasmuch as it cannot essentially break the power of age-old habits of feelings: but it can gradually elucidate the story of how that world of imagination grew up gradually and step by step — and for a moment at least lift us up out of the whole process. Perhaps we shall then recognise that the Thing-in-itself is worthy of Homeric laughter; that it seemed to be so much, indeed everything, and is actually empty, that is to say, meaningless."<sup>1</sup> The end of the passage, of course, is autobiographical, and Nietzsche is recording his own increasing dissatisfaction with the nature of things. He had long known that the world as it seems to be is false, but he had thought that reality had a deeper significance and value far transcending the present. He has now found that it has no value or significance at all. It exists — he does not dream here of denying it — but it merely is, and has no meaning. Nietzsche's laughter has hardly the vigour and crudity of that of the Homeric heroes, and is perhaps forced and shrill; but it is a sign of a released tension, of a realisation that both fear and desire are in vain.

Written from this point of view, much of Nietzsche's argu-

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. viii, § 16, p. 32.

ment has a curious double aspect : he denies both good and evil. Things good he traces to their foul origins, and things evil he treats as natural and even innocent. Thus he declares : " All ' evil ' actions are motivated by the instinct of self-preservation, or still more accurately, by the individual's eye to pleasure and to the avoidance of pain ; but as motivated in this way they are not evil ".<sup>1</sup> Or again : " The aim of malice is not in itself the suffering of others but our own enjoyment, for example, in the shape of the feeling of revenge or of stronger nervous excitation. . . ." <sup>2</sup> And then, later in the same paragraph, having stated that, as malice does not aim at the pain of others, so sympathy does not aim at their pleasure, he proceeds as well as he can to reduce pity to a form of self-gratification.

It is unnecessary to follow Nietzsche into detail, and indeed it would be difficult to do so, on account of the aphoristic nature of the book. Everything is polished, refined, sharpened to the utmost and set forth by itself in the fashion of the moralists he has taken as his guide. There are even some unacknowledged borrowings of sayings whose brevity and force may have seemed to him beyond his own reach.

Much of the book is autobiographical. The fourth section, entitled " From the Soul of Artists and Authors ", is partly occupied with Wagner, who still remained for Nietzsche the artist *par excellence*, but it is even more taken up with Nietzsche's own development, and his summing-up is as follows : The metaphysical views of the importance of art are false : what then is left ? " What position still remains now to art after this has become known ? Above all, throughout centuries it has taught us to look at life in every form with interest and pleasure, and to develop our feeling to such a point that we cry out at length : ' Whatever life may be, it is good '. This teaching of art, to take pleasure in existence and to regard human life, taken as a part of nature, without too violent an accompanying disturbance, as an object developing according to law,—this teaching has grown into us and now comes to light again as an all-powerful

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. viii, § 99, p. 95 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 103, p. 100.

## HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

requirement of knowledge. We could give up art, but we should not thereby lose the ability learned from it, just as we have given up religion but not the elevation and ennoblement of the mind gained through it. As plastic art and music are a measure of the wealth of feeling really gained and secured through religion, so after the disappearance of art the intensity and variety in the joy of life implanted by it would always continue to demand satisfaction. The man of science is the further development of the artist."<sup>1</sup> And in the next paragraph, the last one of the section, entitled "Sunset of Art", Nietzsche bids farewell to the artist — "The artist will soon be regarded as a magnificent survival, and to him, as to a wonderful stranger on whose power and beauty the happiness of earlier times depended, will be paid honour which we do not lightly grant to those of our own kind. What is best in us is perhaps inherited from sentiments of earlier times to which we can hardly now attain in a direct way ; the sun has already gone down, but the heaven of our life is still glowing and illumined by it, although we can behold it no more."<sup>2</sup>

But when he turns to consider the men of science who are to be the purveyors of delights when Wagner and his kind have stepped down from the stage, Nietzsche's enthusiasm nowhere breaks out of control. "To the man who works and seeks in it, science gives much satisfaction, to him who *learns* its results, very little. But since all important truths of science must gradually become ordinary and common, even this small satisfaction disappears, just as we have long ceased to take pleasure in learning the wonderful multiplication table. Now, if science steadily gives less pleasure through itself, and steadily takes more pleasure in casting suspicion on comforting metaphysics, religion and art, that great source of pleasure will be impoverished, to which mankind is indebted for almost all its human character. Therefore a higher culture must give man a double brain, as it were two chambers of the brain, to respond emotionally at one time to science, at another to non-science ; lying beside one another, separable, exclusive ; this is a necessity for health."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 222, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 223.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 251, p. 222.

## NIETZSCHE

A little later he tells us that science is good for the character of the scientist, but not of much value to others. "The value of having for a time followed a strict science strictly, does not lie exactly in its results ; for in comparison with the ocean of what is worth knowing, these will be a vanishingly small drop. But it gives an increase of energy, of reasoning capacity, of toughness in endurance ; one has learned to reach an end by the proper means. Thus in reference to all that one undertakes later it is very valuable once to have been a scientific man."<sup>1</sup>

Here Nietzsche has largely forgotten the other scientists, and is thinking of himself and his philological training, but in the next paragraph he returns to the general question with even more diminished optimism. "The search for truth has still the charm of standing out in strong relief against the grey and now tedious error ; this charm is steadily being lost. Of course we are still living in the youthful age of science and are accustomed to follow truth like a beautiful maiden ; but how will it be when one day she has turned into an elderly bad-tempered-looking woman ? In almost all the sciences the basic principles have either just been found in the most recent times or are still being looked for ; how different the attraction is here from that when everything essential has been discovered and only a miserable autumnal remnant of the harvest is left to be gleaned by the searcher (a feeling which one can come to know in several of the historical disciplines)."

The extent to which the personal element invades these passages is remarkable. Nietzsche is writing of science from the outside, and he has little idea of the almost inexhaustible nature of the basic principles of its main branches. Science for him means something essentially like classical philology, and that in his view had been largely worked out.

This personal aspect is a feature of the whole book ; throughout, the ultimate subject is Nietzsche himself, and the argument constantly slips back into an *apologia pro via sua*. Thus there is curious intermingling of profundity and shallowness, of under-

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. viii, § 256, p. 225 f.

## HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

standing and misunderstanding, of insight and *naïveté*. What fell within his own experience, touching his own problems and his own special development, he could see with almost startling clearness ; but he could not fully understand other people, particularly ordinary people, and much of the world remained beyond his vision. His account of religion is not merely hostile, it is too external to be of much value. His discussion of art is in general more fruitful, for however much he resented Wagner, he knew him well, and, moreover, he could not get rid of the artist in himself. His discussion of society, of women, of family life, of the state, contains many shrewd observations, but the objects are seen only from a distance and by an onlooker confined to a corner. There is one section of the book, however, of which this cannot be said, for it is based on abundant knowledge : it is the last section, and is entitled "Man by Himself Alone". At the end of it Nietzsche sums up his position in a passage of great power and beauty. The free spirit, he says, is a wanderer on the face of the earth, travelling to no goal, and looking at the world of men from the outside. "To such a one, of course, there come bad nights, when he is weary and finds the gates of the city that should offer him rest closed ; perhaps too he will find that, as in the East, the desert stretches to the gate, that beasts of prey howl, sometimes afar off, sometimes near at hand, that a strong wind arises, that robbers take his beasts of burden from him. Then for him the dreadful night sinks upon the desert like a second desert, and his heart becomes weary of wandering. And when the morning sun arises, glowing like a god of anger, the city opens, and he may perhaps see in the faces of the dwellers there still more desert, filth, deceit and insecurity than outside the gates — and the day is almost more evil than the night."<sup>1</sup>

But the philosophy is not to be one of despair and mere negation, so Nietzsche continues : ". . . Thus the wanderer sometimes fares ; but then there come as recompense the rapturous mornings of other surroundings and days when even at the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 638, p. 396.



## NIETZSCHE

grey dawn he sees the thronging Muses dancing near him in the mountain mist, when thereafter in the harmony of his morning soul he walks under trees from whose tops and leafy hiding-places are cast forth nothing but good and bright things, the gifts of all those free spirits which are at home in mountain, woodland and solitude, and which like him in their own way, now joyous, now thoughtful, are wanderers and philosophers. Born of the secrets of the dawn, they wonder how between the tenth and twelfth hours the day can have so pure, transparent, and serenely cheerful a face :—they seek the philosophy of the morning.”

This closing passage is perhaps characteristic of the whole book, a final instance of the fundamental contradictions of mood and attitude which permeate it. Nietzsche is preaching a gospel for free spirits, and he denies freedom. He rests the future and the happiness of man on clear thinking and the avoidance of superstition, and he insists on the necessity of illusion to all life. He refuses art any insight into the nature of things, declaring that it must be superseded by positive science, and he ends not with knowledge but with a vision of beauty.

What is the outcome of it all ? What is the positive value which Nietzsche is so determined to assert amid all his negations ? The obvious answer, the answer given by Nietzsche himself, is of course freedom. “ I am so utterly devoted to independence,” he says, “ I sacrifice everything to it — probably because I have the most dependent soul and am more tormented by the slightest cord than others are by chains.”<sup>1</sup> But why, one may well ask, should such a bare and negative freedom, which renounces everything and leads into the desert, seem so valuable that everything should be sacrificed to it ? Nietzsche himself gave an answer to this question, although he refrained from developing it at this time in his book. In a note which he did not publish he wrote briefly : “ We strive after independence (freedom) for the sake of power, and not conversely ”.<sup>2</sup> Desire for power, the will to power on the part of a man painfully conscious of his

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ix, p. 398.

## HUMAN ALL TOO HUMAN

lack of it, is at the back of all, and in spite of superficial resemblances his philosophy is not that of the Enlightenment. In spirit it is far from the optimistic rationalism of the rough, hearty, robust, positively-minded, free-thinking man of the world, and is rather the cry of a sensitive soul, deeply interested in a life into which he cannot fully enter, intensely jealous of the power he worships but does not enjoy, and determined in his weakness to rid himself of his sense of inferiority by declaring that his weakness is strength.

## XVIII

### THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

WHEN Nietzsche left Sorrento in May 1877 he had in effect ended his friendship with Wagner ; but Wagner did not yet know this, so at the beginning of 1878 he sent Nietzsche a copy of *Parsifal*, which had just been published. Nietzsche made no comment to Wagner, but to others he was less restrained, and although he admitted poetic merit to the situations and their sequence he condemned the drama and music. By this time *Human all too Human* was almost ready for the printer, and as the time of its appearance drew near, Nietzsche became anxious about its reception. At first he thought of publishing it anonymously, and even fabricated the story the printer was to tell about the invisible author ; but he could not keep his own secret, even in intention. It was the judgment of the Wagners that he most dreaded, for it was against Wagner that much of the book was directed, and to remove doubt, Wagner's name was in it at the appropriate places. Nevertheless, perhaps realising that the authorship could not remain unknown, Nietzsche planned to let the Wagners confidentially into the secret, thereby, he may have hoped, tying Wagner's hands. The idea was futile, of course, but what finally prevented it from being carried out was not its intrinsic weakness but the refusal of the publisher to proceed unless Nietzsche's name was on the title-page. So Nietzsche deleted Wagner's name from the book, substituting the less personal, but still transparent, term, the artist. He also set aside the confidential letter he had composed, in favour of a rhyming and almost childish dedication to the Wagners, which gives him somewhat the air of a small naughty boy who has broken a window, and finding that he cannot escape, comes up to his elders with a sickly smile, asking in baby language that they will

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

be kind to him. But such gestures were of no avail. The Wagners realised to the full what Nietzsche had done, and did not forgive the offence. No more communication passed from them to Nietzsche, and only once, and then indirectly, did Wagner break the silence, by introducing a veiled and somewhat mocking criticism of Nietzsche into an article which he published in the *Bayreuther Blätter* in 1878, entitled *Publikum und Popularität*. Probably in the end Wagner entertained no malice, and later to others he spoke well of Nietzsche, but he took no steps to bring Nietzsche back to him.

Nietzsche realised that the break was final, but he was aware of what he had lost, and he remained sensitively conscious until Wagner's death of what Wagner was doing and anxious for news of him. The time would come when he would revenge himself on Wagner for the discomfort he felt, but that time was not yet, his pride maintained him, although it also maintained the separation and the silence. There is one incident, however, which, although of a slightly later date, may be mentioned here for the light it throws on the freedom which Nietzsche felt he had to claim from Wagner, and which tends to confirm the analysis he himself had made of the relation between independence and the desire for power in his own mind. In virtue of his original connection with Bayreuth, Nietzsche seems to have retained the right to two seats at performances there, and in January 1882 his sister wrote to him about the performance of *Parsifal* which was about to take place. "With regard to the Bayreuth seats," he replied, "which of course are entirely at your disposal, I have written to Overbeck. I hope it is not too late. I am *very glad* that you want to be there. But I — pardon me! — *certainly* cannot come, *unless* Wagner personally invites me and treats me as the most honoured of his festival guests."<sup>1</sup>

But others than Wagner were liable to be wounded by the doctrines and tone of *Human all too Human*. With Gersdorff, as we have seen, Nietzsche had already quarrelled, and he had lost touch with Deussen. But Malwida von Meysenbug might take

<sup>1</sup> Jan 1882

offence. So Nietzsche wrote a poetic dedication to her, intended to take the sting out of the book and almost apologising for it. With this Miss von Meysenbug seems to have been satisfied.

There remained Rohde. He was startled and shocked by the new teaching. This was not the Nietzsche he knew, but a colder, more cynical and less profound thinker than his former friend — a Paul Rée rather than a Frederick Nietzsche. Soon after receiving the book, in June 1878, he wrote to Nietzsche expressing his surprise. The letter was friendly, and full of the old reverence for his former leader and companion, and wherever possible it expressed Rohde's appreciation. But on the whole Rohde found the book unsatisfying, and he put his feelings clearly into words. He criticised Nietzsche's denial of responsibility. In such a doctrine, he said, "no one will ever make me believe, no human being believes it, and you do not".<sup>1</sup> The egoistic and hedonistic psychology he also attacked, briefly but trenchantly, and he complained of the one-sidedness of the whole treatment. "However much thus," he said, "I grant the relative truth of almost all your statements, yet equally would I put an 'of course' everywhere at the beginning, and continue them with a 'but'." He acknowledged and treasured the noble quality of the free spirit which he found in the book, and willingly granted the truth of the sober insight which Nietzsche called for as a defence against superstition, but, he added, "I only greatly doubt whether *these* insights are really the final and right ones: the chemist can explain the most glorious picture to me only as a mixture of quite exactly definable and perhaps very evil-smelling chemical substances, and in his way he is right — but if he thinks that by so doing he has explained away the aesthetic worth and meaning of the totality of the picture composed of such elements, then he is in error".

Nietzsche replied, but not to the arguments which Rohde put forward. He showed himself sensitive to the charge of having plagiarised the views of Rée and insisted on his originality. His agreement with Rée, he said, was a delightful coincidence.

<sup>1</sup> 16th June 1878.

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

For the rest, he contented himself with telling Rohde that if he persevered he would come to the same state of enlightenment that he himself had gained and would find joy in it.

The truth is that both men had changed and were continuing to change. Nietzsche's development we have considered : that of Rohde was in an opposite direction. While preserving a theoretic superiority to the dull task of teaching the classics, he had become increasingly immersed in his work ; also he had married a wife to whom he was devoted, and had a fair daughter, whose growth and manœuvres entranced him. As he himself said a little later, he was so engrossed in life that he had come to be a Philistine.

His next letter to Nietzsche was full of sympathy and was written in December when Nietzsche was struggling with the loneliness of his last semester at Basle before his resignation. After a year came another letter, again full of goodwill and fellow-feeling, and then the intervals lengthened as the two men drifted apart.

When the supplements to *Human all too Human* appeared, they added little to Nietzsche's fame, nor did they present any radically new development of his thought. To the second of them, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, Nietzsche gave a brief and rather sketchy dramatic setting, in which the Wanderer and his shadow converse together, to no great purpose, it must be confessed, except that of accentuating the sense of remoteness and isolation which pervades the whole book. Rohde perceived this and wrote with a troubled mind : " I ought to comfort you in your distresses, but I can only say that from your last books, along with all the consolations of mind which they give, I gain a lasting fellow-feeling of distress ".<sup>1</sup>

After the publication of *Human all too Human* Nietzsche remained in Naumburg until February 1880 in a state of pain and dejection. Life, he thought, was finished for him. His problems were not solved, for in reality only a negative conclusion had been reached ; but he could not do more, his cycle was complete,

<sup>1</sup> 22nd Dec. 1879.

## NIETZSCHE

and he must only await the end. But the end did not come, and so, leaving Naumburg, he made his way via Riva, where Peter Gast met him, to Venice, where a new phase of his life began. Gradually, although intermittently, his health improved and he set to work again, turning over in his mind the various insights into life which he seemed to have gained, putting his ideas into aphoristic form, polishing them, and storing them for later use. When the summer heat of Venice oppressed him he removed to Marienbad in the Engadine, and towards the end of the year he reached Genoa, where he stayed throughout the winter of 1880-81, thinking, walking, writing. In Genoa he lived in the attic of a house high up on the hillside, overlooking the bay, in a quiet neighbourhood where he could see and study the people around him, the decent, inarticulate, thrifty working class of which hitherto he had known so little. He was accepted and respected, although not understood, by his simple neighbours, and in their midst he framed for himself an ideal of life in harmony with his environment.

"An independence which does not offend the eye, a softened and veiled pride, a pride which does not encroach on others, because it does not compete for their honours and satisfactions and withstands mockery. My way of life is to be ennobled thus : never vulgar and always courteous, not covetous, but always calmly striving and soaring upwards ; simple, even niggardly to myself, but generous to others. Easy sleep, a free quiet pace, no alcohol, no princes nor other celebrities, no women and newspapers, no honours, no intercourse except with the greatest minds, and now and then with the lower people — this is indispensable like the sight of strong and healthy vegetation — the most easily prepared foods, which do not bring us into the throng of the greedy gormandising crowd, as far as possible prepared by oneself or not needing preparation."<sup>1</sup>

Not the ideal of a Dionysian reveller, but rather of a convalescent recluse.

During this period Nietzsche put together a book composed

<sup>1</sup> *Der einsame Nietzsche*, p. 118.

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

of his aphoristic jottings ; and although it had in it much of the spirit of *Human all too Human*, it was tinged with a more positive feeling. He completed the manuscript in January 1881, and after it had been copied by the indispensable Peter Gast, it made its appearance in June under the title of *Morgenröte — the Dawn of Day*.

In the spring, after the book was written and while Nietzsche was waiting for its appearance, his health declined again, and as the improvement during the winter had raised hopes in his mind, his complaints were all the more bitter. But he recovered again in the early summer, when he went to the Engadine. Marienbad, however, where he had stayed during the previous year, now seemed distasteful to him, and he was almost on the point of abandoning the whole district, when, almost by chance, he discovered the small village of Sils-Maria in the valley of the Inn, and was so charmed by it that for several years in succession he was to be found there in the summer, the winter being spent on the Riviera, chiefly at Genoa or in its neighbourhood.

Sils-Maria, in summer, was in harmony with the varying moods of the convalescent philosopher. It is austere and even stern in outlook, bounded by rugged snow-clad mountains, and on one side by the broad glistening amphitheatre of the Fex glacier. The slopes of the hills are covered by slender larches, which, bending to the wind and ever rising erect again, seemed to Nietzsche to be symbols of his doctrine that life is best where it is dangerous.

But the austerity — the clear air, the forbidding rocks, the cold glaciers — is only one element. In the summer the glades of the valley between the trees break into a riot of colour as the vegetation bursts into bloom, and the red of the Alpine roses, the pinks and the thistles, blends with the blue of the gentians and bluebells, and the yellow of the buttercups and ranunculi.

Near Sils-Maria is a lake, and on a rocky peninsula running into it Nietzsche often lay, looking through the brown pine tree stems across the green meadows and the blue water to the mountains, and singing songs to improvised tunes with such good



heart that he was heard by the passers-by on their way to the lake.

He lived in a cheap back room of a green-shuttered, slate-roofed house, standing back from the road towards the forest ; a room chosen because no direct sun entered into it and there was no glare to trouble weak eyes. To the same end the writing-table was covered with green cloth interwoven with light-green silk.

Here Nietzsche endeavoured to live his wonted life, walking, thinking, writing, with, however, an occasional relaxation befitting the more impulsive, instinctive, assertive and less restrained attitude which he had been commending in his writings. His morning and evening meals he took at home ; at midday he went to the village hotel, and sitting alone in the tourists' restaurant dined generally on soup, roast beef and green peas, with an occasional glass of beer. At times, however, he rose above the frugality of his Genoa creed, and his landlord remarked that he did not always eat judiciously. "When his mother sent him anything which he particularly liked, he would often eat till he was sick. He was very fond of honey in the comb, and would finish a large comb in three days."

In other respects, however, Nietzsche held to his old mode of life, accentuating his loneliness, cutting himself off from his kin and his friends, and refusing a visit even from Paul Rée.

His mind was incessantly active, the great problems of life and destiny continued to press in on him and demand utterance, and the calm of the Alpine valley around him had little reflection in his soul. His mind, as he himself had confessed, was no logical machine, grinding out necessary conclusions from well-founded premises ; it was a tumult of feeling, desire, longing and passion, a repudiation of things past and a yearning after them, a sense of freedom and of loss, a resentment of all bonds and a feeling of nakedness and impotence without them. Nor were the forces that played on his mind impersonal abstractions ; the church of his ancestors, his father's beliefs and piety, the home circle, his friendships, above all that with Wagner, the vision of beauty

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

which came to him in many forms but pre-eminently in Wagner's music, and the embodied pain and weakness which had been his portion for so long — these were the actors on the stage of his mind, it was these that he loved and hated, cherished and destroyed.

Nietzsche's doctrine was still fundamentally negative, although behind it there lurked a positive desire, the desire for strength and fulfilment. In *Human all too Human*, as we have seen, this positive element had been weak, and Nietzsche, exhausted by the effort of denying old values, had in his own heart failed to achieve the serenity and passionlessness which he then thought pure science should bring. Indeed serenity and passionlessness were at all times far from him, and throughout, from the beginning of his thought to the end, he was embodied passion and emotion. In *The Dawn of Day* Nietzsche shows greater strength, more vivacity, and a less tremulous confidence in the value of life, although there is still no broad general positive doctrine set forth. In the summer of 1881 this tendency increased still further, and at times Nietzsche's obstinate and almost instinctive demand that life, in spite of all its pains, shall be tolerable and acceptable, swung over into a rapture that filled his whole soul.

At Sils-Maria an old idea which had crossed his mind more than once, came to him again with new force and aroused a tremendous emotional excitement in him.

"Thoughts have arisen within my horizon", he wrote to Peter Gast in August 1881, "such as I have never before seen. . . . I must certainly live a number of years longer. Ah, my friend, the suspicion occasionally flits through my mind that I am really living a highly dangerous life, for I am one of those machines which can fly to pieces. My feelings are so intense that I shudder and laugh — on several occasions I have been unable to leave my room for the ridiculous reason that my eyes were too swollen — why? On each occasion on the previous day I had wept too much during my walks, not indeed sentimental tears, but tears of rejoicing; and at the same time I sang and talked nonsense,

## NIETZSCHE

filled with a new view which has come to me before anyone else."

The idea which had at this time such a disturbing effect on Nietzsche's tense and emotional mind was that of the eternal recurrence. Certain of the Pythagoreans had suggested that the world phases move in cycles, and among the Stoics similar notions had been entertained. Nietzsche had long known of these views, but he had taken little interest in them and had given them no credence. Suddenly, however, the whole matter appeared to him in a new light. The recurrence of events was no dim speculation of a benighted Greek dreamer, it was a scientific necessity. All that is happening now has happened before innumerable times, and will happen again for ever and ever.

The proof which Nietzsche attempted to give of this doctrine is simple. Here is his statement of it: "The sum-total of energy in the universe is determinate, it is not 'infinite'; let us guard ourselves against such excesses of the notion. Consequently the number of positions, changes, combinations of this energy, although tremendously large and practically 'innumerable', is nevertheless also determinate and not infinite. But time, in which the universe exercises its energy, is infinite, *i.e.* the energy is always the same and always active: until this moment an infinity has already elapsed, *i.e.* all possible developments must already have been in existence. Consequently the development at this moment must be a repetition, so too that which it produces and that from which it arises, and so forwards and backwards. Everything has already been in existence innumerable times, inasmuch as the total arrangement of all forms of energy ever recurs."<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental ideas with which Nietzsche was now working were not examined by him with any high degree of precision. What he meant by energy he probably hardly knew, and why it should have only a finite number of positions or developments or combinations, even though it were of limited total magnitude,

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xi, p. 172.

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

he did not try to make clear. He might as well, of course, have tried to show that there are no irrational numbers and then have proceeded to square the circle. But of the mathematical and physical issues involved he was ignorant.

The only step he took to deal with a possible theoretic difficulty from a scientific point of view was very inadequate. He stated as essential to his argument that in the course of infinite time all possible developments must come into existence and indeed must already have done so an infinite number of times. He repeated the point : " If all possibilities in the arrangement and relation of the forms of energy had not already been exhausted, the infinity would not yet have elapsed. But as the latter must be the case, there is no longer any new possibility and everything must already have existed innumerable times."<sup>1</sup> But Nietzsche also saw that an equal distribution of forces or forms of energy — a state of equilibrium — is one of the possibilities, and that if it had come into being, all development would have stopped — an infinitely long time ago. To avoid this difficulty he asserted that either in some obscure way a state of equilibrium is not one of the possibilities, or the changes of energy must have reached a repeating point without passing through this position. Further he did not go.

Indeed to avoid troublesome considerations which might arise from analysis of space and matter and the combinations possible of them, he boldly removed them from the scene. " Space like matter ", he declared without argument, " is a subjective form, time not. Space arises only through the postulate of empty space. It does not exist. All is energy."

Although Nietzsche placed these quasi-physical arguments at the beginning of his short treatise on the subject, it is difficult to believe that they were the ground of his belief, or indeed anything but an after-thought. The essence of the doctrine for him lies in its consequences. Let us look briefly at these.

In the first place, the doctrine effectively removed purpose from the world, and the conception of an end of things. If the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 174.

world had a goal, that goal would already have been reached an infinite number of times and the process would have stopped long ago.

Secondly, in thus removing God and judgment from the world, Nietzsche obtains in some degree a religious substitute — immortality in a new form. Everything recurs. I and my life therefore recur — endlessly. At first this may seem rather a pale satisfaction, and the joy, if any, of looking forward to one's rebirth may be dimmed by the reflection that it is very far off; everything else that can happen in the universe must first take place — and that will take a long time. To this Nietzsche replies. "Do not deceive yourselves", he says. "Between the last moment of consciousness and the first appearance of the new life there lies 'no time', — it goes past like a lightning flash, although human beings measure it in billions of years, and may not be able to measure it at all. Timelessness and succession are consistent with one another, as soon as the intellect is away."<sup>1</sup> The doctrine is far from clear, and seems a reminiscence of Schopenhauer, but its gist seems plain. For effective purposes, so far as the individual is concerned, death is at once followed by birth — or perhaps by gestation; immediately after death the individual begins to stir again in his mother's womb. *For him* there is no gap, and the repetitions of his life are continuous with one another.

Thirdly, this form of immortality invests life for Nietzsche with tremendous quality, and provides him with a moral law. There is nothing trivial, there are no unimportant actions, for everything that the individual does will be done again and again for ever and ever; it is eternal. Thus there arises a new motive for life, a new principle and sanction in morals: "So live that you must wish to live again, that is the task — you will have to do so in any case. Let him strive to whom striving gives the highest feeling; let him rest to whom rest gives the highest feeling. Let him obey to whom order, following, obedience give the highest feeling. Only, let him become aware of what

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xi, p. 185 f.

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

it is that gives him the highest feeling and shun no means. It is for eternity.”<sup>1</sup>

This is Nietzsche's substitute for Kant's early formula for the moral law : “ Act as if by your will the maxim of your act were about to be made a universal law of nature ”. Moral action, for Kant, is such that its motives can be adopted by all rational beings, fitting the individual to take his place in an ideal kingdom of ends, a community of free men. Nietzsche rejects this conception. He lacks Kant's conception of the universal nature of reason with the ideal community to which it leads, and he replaces it by a set of separate communities, each supposed to be real and not merely ideal, and each consisting of one individual repeated an infinite number of times.

Thus there is a fundamental difference between the two views. For Kant reason is the same in principle in all men, and the moral good is a common good. For Nietzsche, on the other hand, men are all different ; each has to find what gives him the “ highest feeling ”, and after discovering it he has to pursue it resolutely, “ shunning ” no means. What is meant by this “ highest feeling ” Nietzsche does not pause to explain, nor does he consider whether there are any limits beyond which the individual may not go in pursuit of it.

In his rapture Nietzsche did not consider these points. He had found something to replace both religion and morality as he had hitherto known them, something which avoided the tyranny of a God, the fear of an external judgment, the demands of an irksome moral law, and which cast aside all forms of authority and domination. This was enough for him.

Nevertheless a form of coercion remained. There is no escape from life and every failure to extract the best from it will entail the punishment of an infinite repetition of this failure. Nietzsche at times had reason to be weary of life and even to dread it. But with his new doctrines there can be no shrinking : nothing can be avoided. Accept life, therefore, he argues — you cannot refuse it, even by death, for it will come again. Treat it

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 184.

## NIETZSCHE

therefore as having value through and through, and in every situation ask : Is my action such that I can will to do it again for ever and ever ?

Such is the doctrine of the eternal recurrence, the view which, when it burst upon him, seemed to Nietzsche to alter all the colours of the world and to change the course of history.

Of course Nietzsche could not remain indefinitely in the state of ecstasy in which these thoughts developed. He continued to seclude himself in Sils-Maria, but he began to write again in quieter mood and on more ordinary things, retaining his vision, but keeping it apart and refraining from giving it any further immediate expression. In this mood he planned to write two books : one, a continuation of *The Dawn of Day*, perhaps more positive in outlook and mood but essentially of the same character — epigrammatic, caustic and worldly wise ; another, a triumphal poem in which all the glory and beauty of his thought would be expressed in the most sublime and sacred form. The plan was carried out, and the two books were *The Joyful Wisdom* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. The former of these was written in Genoa during the winter months of 1881-2, the latter not until 1883. It will be considered later.

The three books, *Human all too Human*, *The Dawn of Day* and *The Joyful Wisdom* form a series and have much in common. They are aphoristic in style, holding no topic for long, and leaping from one point of view to another without notice. Even within paragraphs transitions are apt to take place at times by the mere association of ideas without definite inner connection. Moreover, they are all anti-metaphysical, sceptical of ultimate knowledge and ultimate standards, and are professedly naturalistic in their outlook. In this respect there is little difference between them. In each of them, too, the relativity of human practice and beliefs is associated with a psychological point of view, which seeks the origin of "good" in "evil", of "truth" in "falsehood", and in general of the higher in the lower, delighting to detect traces of the lower persisting in the higher. Again, the fierce unsatisfied demand for freedom sounds through them all, and

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

leads to an attack — amounting almost to fury in *The Dawn of Day* — on the control of the individual by society and the imposition of moral standards on him. But, as Nietzsche well knew, a merely formal freedom, a separation from all bonds, leads to powerlessness, and to an inferiority the sense of which may cause as great torment as slavery itself. And so throughout, but particularly in the two later books, Nietzsche tends to think in terms of power and to regard the fundamental motive of life, corporate as well as individual, as a desire for power and an attempt to exercise it over others. The idea is not worked out systematically, but it is a persistent undercurrent, frequently coming to the surface. The topic, however, will occupy us more fully in the sequel, and a general discussion of it may be postponed for the present.

The main interest of the two books with which we are chiefly concerned at present, *The Dawn of Day* and *The Joyful Wisdom*, lies in their personal, autobiographical, character, and the life-portrait which Nietzsche draws of himself almost in every paragraph, half wittingly, half unwittingly.

Early in the former book there is a curious excursus on madness. The pressure which society exercises on the individual through custom is overwhelming; how can it be resisted? Only by the successful assumption of great prestige, and this has often been conferred by madness. The great innovator, if not actually mad, may have been driven at times to pretend to be mad in order to acquire the power he needs. But this is not all. The fervour of madness and of inspiration is not merely a device to overawe others, it is also a means to overcome one's own doubt. "Who dares to cast a glance into the wilderness of the most bitter and overflowing distress of the soul, in which apparently the most fruitful men of all ages have languished, and to hear the sigh of the longing and lonely ones! 'Oh give then madness ye Heavenly Ones! Madness, that I at length may believe in myself. Give deliriums and convulsions, sudden lights and darkneses, terrify me with frost and fire, such as no mortal has yet felt, with deafening noise and moving shapes around me,



## NIETZSCHE

let me weep and moan and crawl like a beast : if only I may find faith in myself ! Doubt consumes me, I have slain the law, the law affrights me, as a corpse a living being ; if I am no more than the law, then am I the most vile of all.'"<sup>1</sup>

Is this quite impersonal ? It was not long afterwards that rapture came upon Nietzsche at Sils-Maria.

Another persistent theme is one's relation to one's neighbour. Who is my neighbour ? The answer which Nietzsche gives in effect is : I do not know. We cannot get into real contact with others ; we can perceive only their outer shapes, their boundaries, and the effects they produce on us. In imagination we give them an inward nature by analogy with our own, but we are mistaken. We live in a world of phantoms — " a world that is back to front, upside down, empty and dreamed to be full and straightforward ".<sup>2</sup> This, too, is more than a theoretic doubt on Nietzsche's part — it is the bitter cry of a man resentfully aware of his mal-adaptation to the social world around him. In this connection the most frequent personal reference is to Wagner, who, although unnamed, is the real subject of many paragraphs. Nietzsche's ambivalent attitude to him is very plain, the attitude of dependence and love mingled with a contrasting resentment, rising sometimes to a high pitch.

Moreover, in both books Nietzsche's attack on the domination of the individual by society and his rejection of customary morality as intrinsically degrading, has a personal basis. Theoretically his position ought to be a neutral one, and he expressed it clearly enough in an unpublished note. The driving forces or ends of life are neither good nor bad. " I consider good ", he says, " that which serves an end, but the ' good end ' is nonsense. For the question always is, ' good for what ? ' Good is a term only for a means. The ' good end ' is a good means to an end. "<sup>3</sup> But Nietzsche cannot abide by this, and he ascribes value to ends in a twofold manner. He tends to treat society and its well-being as in some undefined way a good, and also the self-main-

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. x, § 14, p. 22 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 118, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 412.

## THE CONVALESCENT AND HIS RAPTURE

tenance of the individual as another good. But he also contends that by means of customary morality society suppresses the individual, and so he is led to eulogise asocial action, apparently even anti-social action, as itself a hidden good, a defence of freedom. And he reconciles this with the good of society by declaring roundly that those who do not conform to the social demands are in the long run of more value to society than those who do. The rebel, the innovator, the criminal, constitute the strong vital element on which society ultimately depends.

Why the criminal? The answer would seem to be connected in part with a sense of guilt which Nietzsche found it hard to shake off. He had thought he could lay down his old beliefs easily when their intellectual hold was broken; but he could not do so; he *felt* guilty. And so he classed himself with the criminal, and prayed to be delivered, not from sin, but from the sense of its guilt.

In *The Joyful Wisdom* the general line of argument is not more connected than that in the previous writings, but the tone on the whole is calmer, and the criticism, though still keen, is less bitter. Nietzsche's confidence was steadily rising, and the vision had not faded. From Genoa he wrote to his sister in November when *The Joyful Wisdom* was in process. "As in the Engadine I wander over the heights in exultation with a glance into the future such as no one before me has yet dared to give. . . . Believe me, in me there is now the summit of all the moral reflection and toil in Europe, and also of much else. The time will perhaps come when even the eagles will have to look up at me in awe, as in the picture of St. John, which we liked so much as children."

Then he adds something not without importance: "And often something good comes to me from without. The day before yesterday I heard an opera, *Carmen*, by a Frenchman Bizet and was thrilled. So strong, so passionate, so charming, and so southern." He has more to say of this opera later.

In January the fourth book of *The Joyful Wisdom* — the last in the first edition — was completed, and Nietzsche's cheer-

## NIETZSCHE

fulness expressed itself at the beginning of the book in a New Year's resolution — an expression of confidence which has the thought of the eternal recurrence as its background. "I want ever to be learning to see the necessary in things as the beautiful. *Amor fati* : from now on let that be my love. I will not wage war against the ugly. I will not accuse, I will not even accuse the accusers. Let looking away be my only denying. And in general I will at all times be only an affirmer."

This of course is only a mood, the mood of a paragraph, but it reveals the greater determination with which he was prepared to find value in life, and indeed to give value to it.

In the penultimate paragraph of the book Nietzsche hints at the doctrine of the eternal recurrence. If you knew that your life were to be repeated again and again, he asks, for ever and ever, in all its detail, great and small, would you be crushed by the thought, or would you be so uplifted that you would "long for nothing more than for this last eternal sanction and seal" ?

The question is put, but no answer is given. In the final paragraph, Zarathustra appears, the figure which Nietzsche designed to be that of the great affirmer. Zarathustra, here Nietzsche himself, is weary of his solitary wisdom. He is like the bee that has gathered too much honey. He will leave his solitude and go down among men. "I need hands which are outstretched," he cries. "I would fain bestow and distribute, until the wise among men once more become glad of their folly and the poor of their riches."

To give, Nietzsche himself proclaims, is to acquire power over those to whom the gifts are given. Was it mere fullness of heart and ripeness of mind that brought Zarathustra down from his mountain cave to make a gift of his wisdom to men ?

## XIX

### LOU SALOMÉ

EXCEPT for a short visit to Monaco with Paul Rée, Nietzsche spent the winter 1881-2 in Genoa, then, in accordance with one of the whims which often governed his movements, he set out for Sicily, arriving in a sea-sick condition at Messina towards the end of March. Recovering from the voyage, he amused himself for a little by writing verses, and became so enamoured of the place, including its climate and the cheapness of his lodgings, that he decided to stay for the whole summer. But he had forgotten the sirocco. It began to blow in April, and while he suffered from its discomforts letters arrived from Miss von Meysenbug and Paul Rée, urging him to come to Rome. They had discovered a disciple for him, a young woman, who, they said, seemed born for his philosophy. "Just at the moment", Nietzsche wrote to his sister from Rome, "when Gast was very greatly occupied with his own affairs, and on that account was no longer prepared to help me to the same extent as before, the invitation seemed to me very important. So I came here."<sup>1</sup> The young disciple was Lou Salomé, a serious-minded girl between twenty and twenty-one years of age, who, having come with her mother to Italy from Russia, had made the acquaintance of Paul Rée. Rée told her of Nietzsche, and Miss von Meysenbug lent her his books, with the result that she became anxious to meet him. She was introduced to him in the great cathedral of St. Peter at Rome, and the acquaintance quickly ripened.

Nietzsche's first account of her lacked enthusiasm. "So far", he told his sister, "I see only that she has a good head and has learned a great deal from Dr. Rée. But to form a correct judgment I must study her without Rée. He is constantly

<sup>1</sup> End of April 1882.

## NIETZSCHE

prompting, so that I have not yet been able to discover her own thoughts. Could you not come to Switzerland and invite the young lady? Malwida has suggested this. . . . For the rest she is twenty-four years old, plain ( . . . ) ; but like all plain girls she has cultivated her mind in order to become attractive." But in a postscript he adds : " In the interval Malwida has told me that the young girl had confided in her : ' from earliest youth she has striven after knowledge and made every sacrifice for it '. This has quite shaken me. Malwida had tears in her eyes when she told me this, and she believes Miss Salomé is very closely akin to me in mind." Nietzsche soon felt the young girl's charm, and her sympathetic, eager interest conquered him completely. Her description of him as he was at this time deserves notice. " Loneliness," she says, " that was the first strong impression arrested by Nietzsche's appearance. To the casual observer it presented nothing striking ; the man of exceedingly precise manner of dress, with the quiet features and smooth back-brushed hair, could easily be overlooked. The fine highly expressive lines of his mouth were almost completely hidden by a large down-combed moustache ; he had a soft laugh, a quiet way of speaking, and a careful pensive manner of walking in which he bent his shoulders a little ; it was difficult to imagine this figure among a crowd of men — it bore the imprint of solitariness. Incomparably nobly formed, so that the eye was involuntarily attracted to them, were Nietzsche's hands which he himself believed betrayed his mind. . . . He attributed a similar significance to his unusually small and finely modelled ears, concerning which he said, they are the ' true ears for what is unheard of '.

His eyes too were truly revealing. Although half blind, they had none of the peering quality, of the blinking, involuntary forward pressing of many short-sighted people ; they looked rather like guardians and preservers of a treasure, of a dumb secret, which no unauthorised gaze should be allowed to reach. . . . When he did let his real self come out in the course of a stimulating conversation *tête-à-tête*, then in his eyes a deeply

## LOU SALOMÉ

moving gleam would come and go ; — but if he were in a darker mood, then loneliness spoke out of them in a gloomy and almost threatening way.”

“ Nietzsche’s manners ”, she goes on to record, “ also made the same impression of something hidden and repressed. In ordinary life he showed great politeness and an almost womanly gentleness, a constant benevolent even temper — he took pleasure in refined forms of social intercourse and laid weight on them. But in this ”, she remarks with discernment, “ there always lay a pleasure in masquerading — a cloak and a mask for an almost never uncovered inner life. I remember that when I first spoke to Nietzsche — it was a spring day in St. Peter’s Church at Rome — during the first minutes the deliberate precision in him struck and deceived me. But not for long did it deceive regarding this lonely one, who still wore his mask all too clumsily, like some one, that, coming from the desert and the mountains, puts on the guise of a man of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

A few days after the first meeting, Lou with her mother, and accompanied also by Rée and Nietzsche, left Rome for Lucerne. Lucerne, of course, was a place of haunting memories for Nietzsche, filled with ghosts of his early enthusiasms, of Wagner and Cosima in the old unclouded days : so he took the sympathetic girl with him to Tribschen. There, as on the day of his first visit, he stopped short at the outer poplar hedge of the house. There was no one now to invite him in, but beside him was the listening companion ; and to her he began to speak of the days gone and of the great joyous life that had vanished with Wagner. Sitting by the shore of the lake, Nietzsche turned his face momentarily away from the girl and wept.

Then he told her of his own life, of his childhood, of his father, and of the mystery and awe with which his father’s memory was still invested. He spoke of his early years, of his first doubts, of the horror of his first scepticism and of the compensation which Schopenhauer and Wagner had yielded him for the loss of his faith. Finally he said : “ My adventures began

<sup>1</sup> Lou Andreas-Salomé, *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, p. 18 f.

in this manner. They are not ended. Where will they lead me? Whither shall I adventure again? Should I not come back to the faith, to some new belief? In any case a return to the past is more likely than immobility.”<sup>1</sup>

Moved by her presence in these memory-hallowed scenes of his early happiness, Nietzsche swiftly admitted the young girl to an intimacy which, for long, he had conceded to no other, and associated her in his thought with the deepest and most moving things in his life. The natural result followed. After giving her his thoughts, he gave her his heart also: as far as in him lay, he fell in love with her.

But Nietzsche, the hermit of the desert, the man who in the midst of his fellows hid himself from them by masks and guises and by the formalities of precise well-bred behaviour, was once again, as in his previous slighter love affair, unable to plead his cause by word of mouth. He confessed his secret — to Rée, and asked Rée to approach Lou for him. Meanwhile, as in the previous case, he fled to Basle, where for a few days he displayed his enthusiasm and inner excitement to the Overbecks.

Lou, however, accompanied her romantic interest with a cool judgment, and her absorption in the dreams of a philosopher's soul was not confused by her with love for him as a husband. Nietzsche was a delightful enigma, and it was entrancing to be admitted into the hidden recesses of his mind; but on the whole for daily use he was not so good a companion as Rée. Therefore she gently refused him, also by proxy, in the traditional fashion, promising unshaken friendship, not however so much in the likeness of a sister as of a learner and even disciple.

On receipt of this news Nietzsche returned to Lucerne, and put his fortune to the test again. But Lou was firm, and with the promised friendship and intellectual interest Nietzsche was forced to be content.

In July there was to be a performance of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, and many of Nietzsche's friends, including Lou and his sister Elizabeth, wished to be present. Nietzsche would not go there.

<sup>1</sup> *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, p. 50.

## LOU SALOMÉ

He went instead to Tautenburg, a quiet village in a wooded valley running down to the Saale not far from Jena, and he induced Lou to come there with Elizabeth after the festival was over.

Meanwhile Lou had written a poem embodying some of Nietzsche's doctrine, entitling it "To Pain". Peter Gast mistook it for one of Nietzsche's own, and Nietzsche was delighted. "This poem", he wrote to Gast from Tautenburg, while he was waiting for his disciple, "is by my friend Lou, of whom you have not yet heard. Lou is the daughter of a Russian General, and is twenty years old: she is as clear-sighted as an eagle and brave as a lion and yet a very maidenly child, who perhaps will not live long. I owe her to Miss von Meysenbug and Rée. At present she is on a visit to the Rées, after Bayreuth she is coming here to Tautenburg, and in the autumn we are going together to Vienna. In the most remarkable way she is exactly prepared for my thought and manner of thinking.

Dear friend, you will undoubtedly do us both honour of keeping our relationship free from the thought of a love-affair. We are *friends* and I shall hold this maiden and this trust in me sacred."<sup>1</sup>

The reference to Vienna in this passage requires some comment. Nietzsche had completed the last of his aphoristic books, *The Joyful Wisdom*, and he was both proud of it and dissatisfied with his achievement. From Tautenburg he sent a letter to Rohde, telling him that the book would be out shortly. "At most", he said, "you will have still four weeks of peace before it comes. A more mitigating circumstance is that it will be the last for a long series of years: — for in the autumn I am going to the University of Vienna to begin my student years anew, after the old ones have somewhat miscarried for me through a one-sided occupation with philology. Now I have a place of study of my own, and behind it a secret aim to which my further life is consecrated. It is difficult for me to live unless I do so in the grandest style, in confidence be it said, my old comrade! Without an aim which I did not take [*sic*] as inexpressibly important,

<sup>1</sup> 13th July 1882.



## NIETZSCHE

I would not have maintained myself aloft in the light and above the black waters ! This is really my only excuse for the kind of literature I have produced since 1876 : it is my recipe and my self-concocted medicine against disgust with life. What years, what weary pains ! What disturbances, upheavals, isolations ! Who has endured as much as I ? Certainly not Leopardi ! And when I now stand *above it all* with the joy of a conqueror and laden with weighty new plans — and as I know myself, with the prospect of new heavier and still more intimate sufferings and tragedies, *and with the courage for it* ! no one has the right to be offended with me about it if I think well of my medicine. *Mihi ipsi scripsi* — that is how it stands.”<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche was going to give up writing for the time being. He intended to study, to mature his thought, and to put it forth only when it was complete. The details of the future were vague, but provisionally it was to begin at Vienna — and Lou was in it. It is not easy to enter fully into his mind at this moment, but one thing is clear : he was making a fresh start. The old ties were largely broken. The Overbecks, the Seydlitzs, Gersdorff, Miss von Meysenbug and Nietzsche's sister were gathered at Bayreuth round Wagner, while Nietzsche skulked in his tent in the woods. The friendship with Rohde was withering into decay, and with this loss there had already gone all the buoyant years of youth, with their fiery arrogance, their enthusiasms and their dreams of ecstasy. Dionysus too had gone, and the would-be Bacchanalian had turned into a middle-aged pain-ridden man. But, Nietzsche must have assured himself, he was convalescent : a new light had broken in on his mind, new visions shone before it, lurid and terrifying, yet bright and glowing — the eternal recurrence and Zarathustra. He must begin again with another companion, a new and sweeter Rohde — as sharp-sighted as an eagle, as strong as a lion, and as delicate and gentle as a young maiden. Lou Salomé was to replace all that had been lost, and on her he rested his hope for the future.

The performance of *Parsifal* took place on 27th July, and as

<sup>1</sup> 15th July 1882.

## LOU SALOMÉ

the time for the performance drew near, Nietzsche looked with anxious eyes towards his rival. He professed to be satisfied in his isolation. "I am well content that I cannot go", he wrote to Lou Salomé. "And nevertheless, if I could be at your side, in good humour to talk; if I could say this and that in your ear, I could then endure the music of Parsifal (otherwise I could not)."<sup>1</sup> But jealousy peered through the mask. "On Sunday", he wrote to Peter Gast two days before the festival, "I was at Naumburg to prepare my sister a little for Parsifal. I got on strangely enough. I ended by saying: 'My dear sister, as a boy I composed the whole of this kind of music when I composed my Oratorio'—and now I have hauled the old papers out again, and after a long interval, played them through again: the *identity of mood and expression* was unbelievable! Indeed, some passages, e.g. 'the Death of the Kings', seemed to us both more arresting than anything we had got out of Parsifal. I confess: with real terror I have become aware once more how closely I am really related to Wagner."<sup>2</sup> But although Wagner was only now reaching what Nietzsche had passed in his teens, he was nevertheless achieving success. "The old magician", Nietzsche tells Gast a few days later, "has again had a huge success, with sobs from old men, etc." Then follows a remark, hinting at the real feeling behind the protestation. "Cosima, who still has always 'a true inclination towards me', has invited Lou and my sister *privatissime*—more I do not know."<sup>3</sup> But nothing came of it, no gesture from Wotan to Siegfried, or from the old magician to Zarathustra.

At the beginning of August Lou Salomé and Elizabeth arrived at Tautenburg, and Nietzsche began at once to instruct Lou in the better and greater gospel. It too was a gospel of suffering: that Lou understood. Had she not written a poem on it? But she may well have felt that the emphasis Nietzsche laid on the suffering was too prolonged and intense. A fine sentiment, a gesture, is one thing, a philosophy for life is another,

<sup>1</sup> *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> 25th July 1882.

<sup>3</sup> 1st Aug. 1882.

## NIETZSCHE

and the evidence which the poem afforded of the life philosophy of a girl of twenty should not have been given the excessive weight which Nietzsche seems to have attached to it. "Odds Life," says the poet, "must one swear to the truth of a song?" But Nietzsche took everything seriously, and he poured out all the thoughts in his heart to her in a way he had not done in the time of his manhood to anyone else. "He confided them to me", Lou wrote, "as though they were a mystery unspeakably hard to tell: he spoke of them in a low voice, with every appearance of the most profound horror. And truly", she added, "life had been for him such bitter suffering, that he suffered from the eternal recurrence as from an atrocious cruelty."<sup>1</sup> Intellectually Lou understood him, and she could enter into his feeling, but in the depths of her soul she did not finally agree with him. Infinitely more resilient by nature than Nietzsche, she did not go down into the abyss with her whole being; and with all her respect and liking for him, she desired at times some relief. To enter the cold and gloomy forest in the dark of night is piquant and enchanting — if there is warm, lighted, cheerful human habitation to return to, before the frost gets into one's bones. To live in it for ever is another matter. For Lou Nietzsche was an experience rather than a final philosophy of life.

Nevertheless she was impressed, and she did him the honour of disagreeing with him, and putting her own point of view. On 20th August Nietzsche wrote to Peter Gast: "Lou is staying another week with me. She is the most intelligent of all women. Every five days we have a small tragedy scene.— Everything which I have written to you about her is nonsense, probably so is what I am writing now." Nietzsche's head was so turned that he did not know where he was. Lou was leaving him. But he was resolved to see her again, and to realise his dreams. The Vienna project had faded. But Nietzsche substituted a meeting at Munich for it, and later, one at Leipzig. When Lou left Tautenburg she gave him another poem, "Life Prayer", also composed in the spirit of his thought, ending with an affirmation

<sup>1</sup> *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, p. 196.

## LOU SALOMÉ

of life, even in its more severe manifestation as pain. Nietzsche was so impressed by it that he set it to music as a "Hymn to Life", and when he heard later that the president of the German Musical Association was enthusiastic over the "heroic music" he had composed for it, he wrote to Lou: "It would be such a little pathway by which we would both reach the future world — if other paths are withheld".<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Elizabeth had been watching the friendship and intimacy between her brother and Lou with mounting jealousy and anger. She was a possessive woman by nature, and of late years her brother had been slipping out of her keeping. Now she saw him captive to a younger, more intelligent woman, who understood his ideas as she had never done, and who was in danger of becoming a companion to him in a higher sense than she had ever been. But she could not admit this frankly, even to herself; so she began to suspect evil, to hint at immorality, and to interpret Nietzsche's philosophy as if he meant it as a recipe for his own daily life. She listened to scandal, she treasured up reports of idle words, and she wrote to her mother in Naumburg that she had seen her brother's philosophy come to life at Tautenburg, and that she was afraid, for he had come to love evil, while she loved good. After the departure of Lou a breach took place between Nietzsche and his sister, and when he left Tautenburg for Naumburg at the end of August, she refused to return home while he was there. She was incarnate offended dignity and respectability.

Nietzsche was at Naumburg when Elizabeth's letter arrived; the result was a storm of reproaches, and mutual recriminations, leading to a breach between Nietzsche and his mother also. She was cut to the heart by his friendship with Lou, and in her interpretation of it, all her suppressed dislike of Nietzsche's philosophy came to the surface. When she told him that he was a disgrace to his father's grave, he packed his trunks and left Naumburg for Leipzig, carrying with him a wound which perhaps never quite healed.

<sup>1</sup> Podach, *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, p. 40.

## NIETZSCHE

There, as he told Peter Gast, he was to meet Lou. "On October 2nd Lou is coming here : a few weeks later we depart — for Paris, and we shall stay there, perhaps for many years — my proposal."<sup>1</sup> But as in his other proposals, Nietzsche had reckoned without the lady, who, although she was prepared to give him her friendship, was not prepared to give him her life. Moreover, Rée came to Leipzig also. Nietzsche became touchy, and at times was apt to stand on his dignity. His sister's criticisms were troubling his mind, and the stories she carried and the insinuations she made were not without effect. He became suspicious and unhappy. He did not surrender, however, without a struggle, and he laid much of the responsibility for the strained situation on his sister's shoulders. "Human creatures like my sister", he recorded, "are bound to be implacable opponents of my ways of thought and of my philosophy. It is the eternal nature of things that this much, at least, should be so."

"I have defended myself against Elizabeth for years," he complained, "like some desperate animal, but she will not stop tormenting and persecuting me." He expressed himself to her bluntly enough. "I do not like souls of your kind, my poor sister ; least of all do I like them when they inflate themselves morally. I know the pettiness of you and your sort ! — I would rather merit your reproaches." To his mother he wrote : "My sister incidentally is a wretched creature — this is the sixth time in two years that she has broken in on my most sacred feelings, feelings such as have hardly ever existed on earth. . . . After every letter I am indignant at the dirty libellous manner in which my sister speaks of Miss Salomé."<sup>2</sup>

It is important to realise this attitude on Nietzsche's part. Although it came to the surface only at this time, in a weaker form it was of long standing, and years after, when reconciliation had taken place, and he had again submitted to his fate, it persisted beneath the surface. "Must I go on suffering", he wrote to his sister from Nice in the spring of 1884, "for having become reconciled to you ? I am thoroughly tired of your pretentious

<sup>1</sup> 16th Sept. 1882.

<sup>2</sup> *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, p. 51 f.

## LOU SALOMÉ

moral chatter. . . . And this much is certain, that you and no one else have endangered my life three times in twelve months." When in a later chapter we consider Nietzsche's attitude to morality, and his desire to escape to an aristocratic region beyond good and evil, it will be well to keep in mind that for him morality meant primarily domination by Naumburg, by his mother, and above all by his sister. His violence against it is partly the reaction of a boy who had never quite escaped from home.

He tried to get away. He rejected his sister's proffered guidance and insulted her, and before the end of the year he broke off communications with his mother also. But the charges and insinuations remained in his mind. What stung him most was the allegation that Lou had no real sympathy with his views, had minimised his worth to others, even to Wagner, and had spoken lightly of him. Even the suggestion of such behaviour, a suggestion based on ill-natured second-hand gossip, hurt him : he could not be utterly certain that it was not true. He demanded to be taken entirely at his own estimate ; and it was so easy to think that others were laughing behind his back at his solemnity. He tried to close his mind against his fears, but failed ; and when Lou complained to him about a gratuitous offensive letter she had received from Elizabeth, he rebuffed her, and quarrelled with her. The stages of the deterioration of his relations with Lou and Rée at Leipzig are not clear, but the general effect is certain. His suspicions of Rée showed in his behaviour, and he was only partly reassured by Rée's protestations and explanations. Lou was less complacent, and defended herself against attack with some vigour. Nietzsche took more offence at this, and in his final letter to her he insulted her beyond measure. Only a draft of it remains, but it is sufficient.

"What kind of letters are those you are writing, Lou ! Vindictive little schoolgirls write just like that. What have I to do with these wretched matters ! Please understand : I want you to raise yourself before me, not to lower yourself. How can I then forgive you if I have still to discover again in

## NIETZSCHE

you the essential thing on account of which forgiveness can be granted to you at all.

I make no reproach against you to-day except that you were not honest to me about yourself at the right time. In Lucerne I gave you my writing on Schopenhauer — I told you that my fundamental ideas were in it and that I believed they would be yours also. You should have read them and said, No. (In such matters I hate all superficiality !) It would have spared me much ! In your mouth such a poem as ' To Pain ' is a profound untruth. . . .

Say nothing, dear Lou, in your favour : I have already done more on your behalf than you could — both to myself and to others. People like you could be endured by other people only through a *high* aim. . . .

How poor you are in reverence, in gratitude, in piety, in courtesy, in admiration, modesty — not to speak of higher things. What would you reply if I asked you : Are you brave ! Are you incapable of treachery ?

Do you not realise that when a man like me is in your neighbourhood, he requires great self-conquest. . . .

You have to do with one of the most patient and benevolent of men : but take good note that against all petty self-seekers and sensualists I need no other argument than disgust. . . .

I have never yet been deluded about a human being : and in you there is that urge towards a holy selfishness which is an urge in obedience to the highest. By some curse or other you have somehow exchanged it for its opposite, the selfishness and lust for gain which wants nothing but life. Realise that that catlike egoism, which no longer loves anything, and that feeling in nothingness, to which you confess (things which one has in order to overcome them, in order to overcome oneself) are just what is most objectionable to me in a human being. . . . If you give rein to all that is wretched in your nature : who will be able to go about with you !

You have done harm, you have given pain and not only to me but to everyone who has loved me — this sword hangs over them."

## LOU SALOMÉ

When Nietzsche ceased to complain and moralise, he concluded with a supreme insult : " Good-bye. I did not read your letter to the end, but I read too much as it was." <sup>1</sup>

It is not without interest to note that Nietzsche's sister remarked on the " courtesy " of this manner of taking farewell.

Nietzsche's world was again in ruins. Lou, Rée, Elizabeth, his mother : they were all unendurable. Full of disappointment and wounded vanity, he fled to Basle, and pouring out incoherent grief to the Overbecks, told them that he had been betrayed. They tried to persuade him to stay with them for a few days, but he would not do so, and fled to Genoa, from which he soon made his way to Rapallo, a few miles along the coast. There he spent the winter, isolating himself in his misery, and cutting himself off from his few remaining friends. Sleeplessness too attacked him, and he began to dose himself with chloral hydrate as a remedy against it. The cloud of melancholy hung over him for some months ; then suddenly, soon after the turn of the year, it parted for a time and the sun blazed through. About the beginning of February the surge of his ideas overcame his inhibitions, and in a state of excited exultation he began to write again — the first part of *Zarathustra*.

This mood, with the sense of inspiration which accompanied it, lasted for some ten days ; then it left him again, and he fell back into deeper woe than ever. His health deteriorated too, and he suffered from a sharp attack of influenza. His sister heard of this in April, and when she wrote to him, Nietzsche surrendered at discretion. " I rejoice from my heart ", he said, " that you do not wish to wage war against your brother any longer. Especially when I have reached a point where no one must wage war against me, if one is ' wise ' and my sister. It has been my heaviest and sickliest winter : except for ten days, which were exactly enough for me to do something which compensates for the whole of my heavy and sick existence." <sup>2</sup> At the beginning of May he joined her in Rome, remaining there until the middle

<sup>1</sup> *Der einsame Nietzsche*, pp. 189 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 27th April 1883.



## NIETZSCHE

of June, and during that period, by her persistence, she gradually re-established her ascendancy over him, bringing him back to her estimate of men — and women, and making him assent again to her judgments of the world. But although her power was sufficient to do this, it was not complete ; she could not make him happy, nor could she satisfy his mind. His vague and almost hopeless yearning broke forth in the impassioned prose “ Night Song ” which he later placed in the second part of *Zarathustra*.

Towards the end of June he parted from his sister, going back to Sils-Maria, into his solitude and place of inspiration. There again the spirit came upon him, and he wrote the second part of *Zarathustra*. But it was not so easy to get free from the things of the world. The quarrel with Lou Salomé and Rée was not dead ; for Elizabeth revived it, and Nietzsche was almost helpless against her. Apparently some inquiries were made from Russia by some of Miss Salomé’s relations concerning what was happening to her, and Elizabeth improved the occasion by writing to Paul Rée’s mother, warning her what an undesirable character Lou Salomé was. Nietzsche congratulated her on the brilliance of her malice, and hastened to add also that she was right in every particular : everything she said was the truth, the plain uncoloured truth. Nor was this all. Under her influence Nietzsche wrote a strongly worded account of his new version of affairs to a brother of Paul Rée, George by name, whom he had met at Leipzig. George replied by a threat of an action, and Nietzsche began to think of a duel. Nietzsche also wrote to Paul Rée,—drafting the letter nearly a dozen times,—and attacked Lou Salomé, interpreting her refusal to take him and his philosophy at his own undiminished valuation, as a sign of shameless egoism and superficiality. Paul replied with some spirit, and Nietzsche’s reply ended all relations between them. The letter concluded thus : “ I would have great pleasure in giving you a lesson in practical morals with a few bullets : and perhaps I might succeed with good luck in removing you once and for all from occupying yourself with morals — for such an

## LOU SALOMÉ

occupation, Dr. Rée, clean hands are necessary and not slimy fingers !

After you had written this letter [the reply to the aspersions on Lou] no doubt remained concerning your character : and we have Miss Salomé to thank for being the first to raise the veil from *this* Isis picture.— But for years I took you to be upright and defended you on this point against everyone ! My knowledge of men is in bad shape — there is no doubt : and you have every reason to laugh at me.”<sup>1</sup>

Lest there should be any lingering doubt about his views, Nietzsche wrote also to Mrs. Salomé in August, reiterating his complaint that Lou had not come up to expectation, and concluding : “ My sister and I — we have every reason to mark in black on the calendar of our life the meeting with your daughter ”. To Miss von Meysenbug he put the matter in a more philosophical guise, explaining that he had always been too compassionate with “ this Rée, a liar and a sneaking slanderer ”. Pity for people like him always leads to mischief and must be kept under. “ One ought to carry through one’s ideal of man, one ought to compel and overcome one’s fellow men as well as oneself with one’s ideal ; and thus produce creatively. For this it is necessary to keep one’s pity well under curb, and to treat what goes against one’s ideal (e.g. such rabble as L. and R.) even as enemies.”<sup>2</sup>

But Nietzsche was not all happy warrior : he liked his enemies best at a distance — at least at the far end of his pen. Towards the end of July he wrote to his sister : “ In the meantime I have had a hellish day, as a result of which I was ill for several days. I had just finished lunch, when the landlord of my hotel told me, ‘ At three o’clock the family of the Rées is coming, eight people ’. I cannot describe all that went through my head during the hours that followed : I ran to the post, it was streaming rain, I booked a seat for myself next morning, I wanted to get to Basle, at last I had to go to bed, and really I shivered at every noise in the house. I am absolutely not made for enmity.

At length it turned out that it was all due to a misunder-

<sup>1</sup> *Der einsame Nietzsche*, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 241 f.

## NIETZSCHE

standing, a similar sounding name. But nevertheless, as a result of this day, I have sent off my letter to George Rée."

Nietzsche complained to Overbeck also of his ill equipment for the rôle into which he was being forced. "My relatives and I — we are too different. The measure which I found necessary this winter, of not receiving any more letters from them, cannot be kept up (I am not hard enough for it). But every contemptuous word which is written against Rée or Miss S. makes my heart bleed; it seems I am badly made for enmity (whereas in her last letter my sister was still writing, I should be in good spirits, for it was a lively jolly war)."<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche seems to have swung about in mood almost from day to day; for to his sister he sent in jest six lines of jingle entitled "The Merry War", in which he stated that

The Lama fain would conquer  
In lively jolly war  
The poisonous dragons' brood :

adding,

I wanted too to join in,—  
But that did soul and stomach  
And e'en the fight no good.

Soon after this, in October, he visited Basle, arriving at the Overbecks' sick and depressed. After recuperating with them, he returned to Genoa, from whence he wrote again to Overbeck: "My friend, the parting from you plunged me back into the deepest melancholy, and during the whole of the return journey I was not free from evil and black feelings; among which was a real hatred of my sister, who by remaining silent at the wrong time and talking at the wrong time has robbed me of the result of my best victories over myself: so that in the end I have become the victim of a ruthless feeling of revenge, although precisely my most inward mode of thought has renounced all revenge and punishment: — this conflict within me is bringing me step by step nearer to madness. . . . Perhaps reconciliation with her [his sister] was the most fatal step in this affair — I

<sup>1</sup> *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, p. 46 f.

## LOU SALOMÉ

see *now* that it made her believe she had a right to her revenge on Miss S."

In 1884, when the violence of his emotions had decreased, he wrote to his mother: "... Whatever objection may be made to the girl, and certainly it is other than any my sister makes — one thing still remains fixed, that I have found no more gifted or thoughtful creature. And although we never agreed, anymore than Rée and I did, yet after being half an hour together we were happy over the multitude of things we had learned. And not in vain have I attained my highest achievement in these last twelve months."

To Overbeck, a quiet but most constant friend, he showed his real feelings after the strain and heat had abated. And when in the spring of 1884, weary of solitude, he revived once again a project for a hermitage of like-minded souls among whom he might unmask, he thought of Rée and Lou. "Lanzky", he told Overbeck, "has already decided to come in: I should like to be able to persuade Köselitz [Peter Gast]. Perhaps even Dr. Rée and Miss S., with whom I should greatly like to put some things right that my sister put wrong. I heard recently about both; and pleasant news."

... Something of Miss S. is to appear this spring — 'Concerning Religious Emotions' — I discovered this theme in her, and am extraordinarily glad that my Tautenburg efforts are bearing fruit after all."<sup>1</sup>

It was in the midst of this in spiritual turmoil that *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was written. The first part, as we have seen, was put together in ten days of excitement at Rapallo, in February 1883, and the second in similar fashion at Sils-Maria in June and July. At Nice in January 1884, again in a short glowing period, the third part came into being, but after that the tension relaxed. The fourth part, the last written, was put together more slowly and in more deliberate piecemeal fashion, at Zurich, Mentone and Nice, in the autumn and winter of 1884-5. It is this work that we have now to consider.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47 f.

## XX

### THE RETICENT PROPHET

NIETZSCHE realised that all his books were personal documents and revelations of his own needs. In writing about *The Joyful Wisdom* to Rohde in July 1882, he hinted at the great idea — viz. the eternal recurrence, to which his life was henceforth to be consecrated. For, he said, without some such aim "I would not have maintained myself aloft in the light and above the black waters! This is really my only excuse for the kind of literature I have produced since 1876: it is my recipe and my self-concocted medicine against disgust with life. What years, what weary pains! What disturbances, upheavals, isolations! . . . And when I now stand *above it all* with the joy of a conqueror and laden with weighty *new* plans — and, as I know myself, with the prospect of new heavier and still more intimate sufferings and tragedies, *and with the courage for it!* no one has the right to be offended with me about it if I think well of my medicine. *Mihi ipsi scripsi.*"

With the winter of 1882 the more intimate suffering did come. The spiritual adventure with the girl disciple had ended, and, insulted and humiliated by his home, he had for the time being broken off relations with it. In Rapallo, gathering himself together with his misery, his heartache, his poor health and his almost utter isolation, he communed with himself beside the pools and rocks of the shore and on the ascents of the rising ground of the promontory behind. Then suddenly in the beginning of February 1883 his mood changed. The headaches disappeared, his step became light and vigorous, the skies cleared, and for some ten days he felt a physical and mental exultation not unlike that which had overtaken him a few months previously in Sils-Maria. In this state he wrote the first part of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

This book is not a philosophic treatise. It is not systematic, it contains no argument, and attempts no proof. It is the outpouring of a soul, voicing, often abruptly, with lavish imagery, its moods, its prejudices, its hatreds, its desires and yearnings. Nietzsche himself was largely conscious of this. To Karl Hildebrand he wrote from Rome in May 1883 : " Everything which I have thought, suffered, and hoped is in it and in such a way that my life is now about to appear justified ". A month later, when the second part was taking shape, he wrote to Gersdorff : " Do not let yourself be deceived by the legendary form of this little book ; behind all the simple and unusual words there stands my deepest seriousness and my whole philosophy. It is a beginning of the revelation of myself — not more ! " In August he told his sister : " Every word of my *Zarathustra* is indeed a victorious scorn, and more than scorn, of the ideals of this age ; and behind almost every word stands a personal experience, a self-mastery of the highest order ".

But *Zarathustra* does not depict or express Nietzsche as a whole. Nietzsche varied in mood and outlook, a variation which at times he attributed to the weather. To his sister he wrote : " Under a clouded sky and gathering clouds I am in a literal sense another man, melancholy and very much disgruntled with myself and occasionally also with others. (*Zarathustra* I and II are the productions of a bright and clear sky, and so is the *Sanctus Januarius*. Anyone who judges me by such things, judges me a hundred times too favourably *à la Gast.*) " <sup>1</sup> The gloomy side — the sense of weakness, failure, despondency — is not wholly absent from *Zarathustra*, for the remarkable states of euphoria, during which parts of the book were written, although reactions against the despondency and victories over it, arose from it, and in their own way reflected it. The mood changed, but the facts of life remained unaltered.

When the conception of *Zarathustra* was developing in Nietzsche's mind, from 1881 onwards, there were two leading ideas in his thought, both of which seemed to him new and of

<sup>1</sup> Middle of Aug. 1883.

## NIETZSCHE

unparalleled importance. These were the Superman and the eternal recurrence. And, as we have seen, it was the latter idea which was associated with the ecstasy and transport of July 1881 in Sils-Maria. But in the first part of *Zarathustra* there is no explicit reference to the eternal recurrence. The idea was not forgotten, but it was repressed and held back. As we have seen, some intellectual doubts regarding it seem to have troubled him, and, realising his incompetence in scientific matters, he proposed to go to the University of Vienna or to Munich to study anew and find a proof for his belief. But there was more than this — for proof, or the lack of it, was no final overwhelming consideration to Nietzsche. He was afraid of his idea — fascinated, yet terrified ; and for the time being the fear was dominant. Looking back from Rapallo over the past few months, even in a state of ecstasy he was not prepared to relive his life unaltered. The notion of the eternal recurrence was therefore suppressed for the moment, and Zarathustra began his message to the people with the words “I teach you the Superman”.

The two ideas — the eternal recurrence and the Superman — although not logically incompatible, correspond to different attitudes of mind, and are distinct and even opposed in their emotional tendencies. The former corresponds to the desire to find value in life as it actually is, the latter to a desire for something beyond the present, something endless, greater and better than existing reality.

It is this second tendency which is uppermost in the first book of *Zarathustra*, and it springs from a disgust with the present and from a sense of failure and misery which in a man of another temperament would lead to explicit pessimism. The Superman, at this stage, is Nietzsche's medicine against pessimism.

It is important to realise where the new gospel begins. “I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be overcome.” Nothing is to be made of man as he is ; only a new creature, something beyond man, the Superman, can have real value. This is one of the main motives underlying many of the

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

chapters of the book. A few references will suffice to make this clear. The second chapter, *Academic Chairs of Virtue*, is an attack on the philosophy of life which reconciles man with his position in life and adjusts him to his environment. Such an adjustment Nietzsche rejects with the scornful epithet of "sleep", and the philosopher who propounds it he labels one who knows how to produce sleep. "His wisdom means: to wake, in order to sleep well." Unconsciously Nietzsche is strongly attracted by the conception: "and truly," he says, "if life had no sense, and I had to choose nonsense, this would be for me too the nonsense most worthy of being chosen". But consciously he will not have it. He cannot.

Further, he repeats the old criticism of the organised community, the state; the new idol he calls it. He is quite definite on the point. Reversing for the occasion his former condemnation of custom and the morality it produces, he acclaims, though but faintly, races or peoples in order to contrast them with states. "Every people has its own tongue of good and evil which its neighbour does not understand. Its speech it has devised for itself in customs and laws. But the state tells lies in all tongues of good and evil; and whatever it says, it lies — and whatever it has, it has stolen."

"Everything in it is false: with stolen teeth does it bite, the savage one. Even its bowels are false."

"Many, too many, are born," he adds, "for the superfluous ones was the state devised." But by this term, superfluous ones, Nietzsche does not mean merely some submerged tenth, or the unemployed, or even the proletariat at large: he means all those who make up the state, and assist its working and find success within its boundaries.

"I call it the state," he says, "where all are poison-drinkers, good and bad: the state where all lose themselves, good and bad; the state where the slow self-murder of all — is called 'life'."

Just look at these superfluous ones. They steal the works of the inventors and the treasures of the wise: they call their theft culture — and everything becomes for them sickness and trouble.



## NIETZSCHE

Just look at these superfluous ones. They are always ill, they vomit their bile and call it a newspaper. They devour one another and can't even digest themselves.

Just look at these superfluous ones. They acquire wealth and become poorer thereby. Power they desire and first of all the crowbar of power, much money — these indigents."

It is not only the officials of the state that Nietzsche dislikes : he regards the ordinary man who lives in the state with abhorrence. "Where solitude ends," he says, "there begins the market; and where the market begins, there begins also the clamour of the great actors and the buzzing of the poison flies." The great actors are Wagner and the like, the poison flies are the bulk of the population.

Now, there is no theory in all this. Nietzsche is not suggesting an alternative arrangement of society by which mankind as a whole should be controlled or guided in place of the state. He is merely expressing his personal dislike of the ways of his fellow men. He does not suggest that the state should be abolished and something else put in its place ; he is content to keep away from its chief manifestations — to live at Rapallo, near but not in Genoa, or at Sils-Maria, where the crowd does not come at all, but to which books, honey, sausages, gloves and stockings may be sent at reasonable intervals.

This, however, is not the whole matter. Nietzsche does more than dislike the crowd ; he is not sure of his friends. The old longing for a lasting, intimate comradeship appears anew ; emphasis is laid on the need for a friend, even on the part of a hermit. But friends, Nietzsche reflects, are potential enemies — indeed they have turned into enemies — and they are never so noble as they should be. "Didst thou ever see thy friend asleep?" asks Zarathustra ; "wert thou not dismayed that thy friend looked like that ? Oh, my friend, man is something that must be overcome."

This pessimistic conception of humanity — "man is something that must be overcome" — is the background against which the picture of Zarathustra is painted.

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

One line of escape from the fundamental pessimism of such a doctrine is in the direction of a religious or metaphysical theory that looks to a world beyond for compensation. Nietzsche rejects such a solution. There is no other world, no beyond : nothing but the world of space and time. In a remarkable passage he criticises the view of life which dominated him when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy* — the Dionysian conception by means of which he tried to avoid the pessimism of Schopenhauer.

"The work of a suffering and tortured god did the world then seem to me. . . . The creator wished to look away from himself, so he created the world.

Intoxicated joy is it for the sufferer to look away from his suffering and to lose himself. Intoxicated joy and a losing of oneself did the world once seem to me.

This world, the eternally imperfect, the image of an eternal contradiction and an imperfect image — an intoxicated joy of its imperfect creator, thus the world once seemed to me."

But, he goes on, "this god whom I created was the work and madness of man, like all gods. Man he was, and only a poor fragment of man and ego : out of my own ashes and glow it came to me, this ghost, and verily, it did not come to me from beyond."

Dionysus, thus, is the figment of the imagination of one overcome by suffering and a sense of impotence. He comes, says Nietzsche, from "weariness which would reach the ultimate with one leap, with a death leap".

All the gods, and all other worlds beyond this present one, are equally human delusions, and yet in the Dionysian religion there was something, Nietzsche thought, which he would still keep, — "the short madness of happiness, which only the greatest sufferer experiences". Thus it is that Nietzsche begins to preach a Dionysian religion — without Dionysus.

We have already seen that in the eternal recurrence Nietzsche found his own peculiar form of the religious consolation of immortality. But at the period which we are now considering that conception was repugnant to him ; he therefore turned to

## NIETZSCHE

another aspect of religious consolation and developed a substitute for Heaven and God.

Heaven, of course, can only come on earth, and there is no real God. The future therefore is called in to replace the world beyond, and if there is no God, there must be a demi-god, a hero, a Superman.

In accordance with this point of view Nietzsche attacks fiercely all those who preach abnegation and decry the world and the flesh. Bodily existence is the ultimate reality — so far as there is an ultimate reality at all — the mind is but its instrument and tool. Nietzsche's philosophical doctrine here is drawn from Schopenhauer, but he changes Schopenhauer's conclusion, approving and finding good where Schopenhauer found evil. Those who despise the body fail utterly to realise the nature of life and Nietzsche utters his final conclusion of them : " Ye are no bridge for me to the Superman ". For him they are naturally classed among the superfluous.

" These are the frightful ones, who carry a beast of prey around within them, and have no choice except lust or self-laceration. And even their lusts are self-lacerations too.

They have not yet become men, these frightful ones : may they preach abstinence from life and pass away themselves ? "

Life is to be affirmed then, not denied. Or at least if it is to be denied in the form of the existent human species, it is to be reaffirmed in an improved form in the Superman. But no solution of the problem of existence is to be found merely by transferring the venue from man to the Superman. The precise characteristics of the Superman which distinguish him from man as such have to be indicated, if any idea of the good life — if such there be — is to be grasped : and in the end these characteristics must be drawn from man himself. The Superman thus, like Dionysus himself, is a projection from ordinary humanity, not indeed into an eternal heaven, but into a world to come.

It is thus man himself who has to be made Dionysian : and the ascription of success only to the Superman is ultimately little more than an acknowledgment that the conception at

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

present lacks reality. The problem, thus, with which Nietzsche was faced and which he is implicitly seeking to answer throughout Zarathustra, is : How does man enjoy the Dionysian attitude in a world where there is no Dionysus ?

In the first part of *Zarathustra* the answer given to this question is very slight. Nietzsche realises the difficulty of his problem. His own efforts, his confident preaching of freedom, have not been successful. "As yet", Zarathustra tells his disciple, "thou art not free ; thou still seekest freedom." Nor, in fact, was Zarathustra himself in much better case. Nietzsche's doctrine at this point becomes uncertain. On the one hand, he teaches in accordance with the view he had put forward previously, that all good is relative ; the good and the virtue of the individual are therefore peculiar to him, and his highest good is to follow them. "My brother," he says, "when thou hast a virtue, it is thy virtue, thou hast it in common with no one." "Speak thus," he advises, "stammering : 'it is *my* good, which I love, thus doth it please me wholly, thus alone do I will the good'." Moreover, this good comes ultimately from instinct, from the passions which the body sets up in the soul. "Once thou hadst passions and calledst them evil. But now hast thou only thy virtues : they grew out of thy passions." How did this transformation take place ? "Thou hast laid thy highest aim in the heart of these passions : then they became thy virtues and joys. And though thou wast of the race of the hot-tempered or the voluptuous, or of the fanatical or the vindictive, at the end all thy passions turned to virtues and thy devils to angels."

Zarathustra's exposition lacks clarity : he maintains that passions become virtues when one's highest aim is laid on them and that one's virtue is individual and ineffable. But he goes on to state that the virtues thus created may continue to be manifold, and with all their virtue may conflict as if they were still unregenerate. "Illustrious", says Zarathustra, thinking perhaps of Nietzsche, "is it to have many virtues, but a hard lot ; and many a one hath gone into the wilderness and killed himself because he was weary of being the battle and battlefield of virtues."

## NIETZSCHE

There is no clear theory here, only a yearning both for the free scope and rush of passion and for the unity of a single controlling aim by a mind which possesses neither adequately.

The Superman must be strong, vital, passionate and yet under control. This leads Nietzsche back to the conception of the warrior, and to a eulogy of war. Again there is no explicit theory behind his utterance, merely the aspiration by the weak solitary one for the strength of disciplined force. It is the watcher by the wall who is speaking, feeble, isolated, hungering for the power and force of the army. The call for freedom is forgotten for the moment, the resentment against the herd is allayed, the antagonism to Prussian militarism is suppressed, and the man who found himself unable to bear the "jolly" little war of his sister, and whom the mere name of the Rées sent in panic-stricken flight at Sils-Maria, proclaims stridently the unrestrained glory of war.

"Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars. And the short peace more than the long. . . .

Ye say it is the good cause which hallows even war? I say unto you : it is the good war which hallows every cause."

From this there is an easy transition : "Man shall be trained for war, and women for the recreation of the warrior : all else is folly".

Nietzsche had failed both in war and in love. Moreover, instead of his dominating women, women had dominated him. From his youth onwards their influence had controlled him, and it was women — Lou, Elizabeth, his mother — that sent him to Rapallo in despair : not unnaturally he turned the matter round.

"Whom does woman hate most? — Thus spake the iron to the lodestone : 'I hate thee most because thou attractest, but are too weak to chain me to thee'." But it was Nietzsche whose magnetism had failed.

"The happiness of man is, 'I will'. The happiness of woman is, 'He wills'." But the women had not been obedient and the lord has failed to command. So Zarathustra closes his

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

discourse with a confession of failure : " Thou goest to women ? Forget not thy whip."

Nietzsche's view of marriage and the family as set forth in this first part of *Zarathustra* naturally suffers from the limitations of his general outlook, and stress is laid on incompatible and unsuitable marriages.

" Worthy did this man seem, and ripe for the meaning of the earth : but when I saw his wife, the earth seemed to me a house for madmen." Nietzsche therefore recurs to his basic position : man is something to be overcome.

" Beyond yourselves shall ye love someday. . . .

Bitterness is in the cup even of the best love : thus does it cause longing for the Superman."

The underlying pessimism of the whole position, or, in other words, the failure and maladjustment of fragmentary personality presented in *Zarathustra*, is not difficult to discern : there is, however, another feature still to be added. Unable to find real happiness, cheerfulness, friendliness, serenity in his neighbourhood, weighed down by depression and the still persistent uncomfortable feeling of guilt, Nietzsche reacts against these feelings by a direct denial of them : the Dionysian laughter at tragedy thus reappears, the forced, uncomfortable, misplaced laughter of one resolved to laugh in any fashion rather than not laugh at all.

" Who among you ", demands Zarathustra, " can at the same time laugh and be exalted ?

He who climbs the highest mountains, laughs at all tragic plays and tragic realities." Later he continues :

" There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some method in madness.

And to me also, who appreciates life, the butterflies, and soap bubbles, and whatever is like them among us, seem most to enjoy happiness.

To see these light, foolish, graceful, lively little souls — that seduces Zarathustra to tears and song."

Zarathustra, like Nietzsche, was perhaps rather easily moved

## NIETZSCHE

to tears in this way, and the confession of an intense overpowering longing for a sense of irresponsibility could hardly be more clearly indicated than by these lines and by those which follow.

"I should only believe in a God who would know how to dance.

And when I saw my devil, I found him serious, thorough, profound, solemn : he was the spirit of gravity — through him all things fall.

Not by wrath, but by laughter, does one slay. Come let us slay the spirit of gravity."

The final chapter of the book is entitled *The Bestowing Virtue*. It commends not selflessness and resignation, but a self-seeking which builds up a great and full self, overflowing to others and benefiting them. Ignoring utterly the doctrine which he strongly emphasises elsewhere of the complete relativity of good and bad, Nietzsche acclaims the bestowing virtue as the highest virtue, and the claim is made absolutely.

"Power it is," asserts Zarathustra, "this new virtue ; a ruling thought it is, and around it a wise soul : a golden sun, and round it the snake of knowledge."

But we may ask : What is it in the end that this bestowing virtue has to bestow ? Nietzsche was embarrassed by the question.

"When Zarathustra had spoken these words," Nietzsche writes in the last section of the final chapter, "he was silent, like one who had not said his last word ; for a long time he weighed his staff doubtfully in his hand. At length he spoke thus : — and his voice had altered.

'Alone I am going now, my disciples ! Ye too go now away and alone ! So I wish it.

Verily, I counsel you : go away from me and guard yourselves against Zarathustra ! And better still ; be ashamed of him ! Perhaps he has deceived you.'

The advice was not altogether necessary at the moment, for as yet the new prophet had no other disciple than perhaps the tame Peter Gast ; but Zarathustra goes on to announce in words which imitate the Gospels, that he will come again —

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

after his disciples have denied him — and leading them into a great noontide, he will make them, with himself, children of one hope. What is this hope? Zarathustra does not tell, but it is clearly something of what he had not yet spoken, a hope the nature of which the disciples have not yet heard. Zarathustra, thus, is the preacher of a gospel not yet disclosed, a bestower who still withholds his main gift. Such is the outcome of the book, which ends with a cry, echoing its opening theme: "Dead are all gods; now do we wish that the Superman may live".

Most of the second part of *Zarathustra* was written in some ten days at Sils-Maria in the midsummer of 1883; but one chapter in it, that entitled *The Night Song*, was written in Rome during the previous spring, and this chapter may serve as an introduction to the whole. The song was composed by Nietzsche, when, in a state of deep dejection, he sat on the loggia of his boarding-house overlooking the dimly lighted city, while below him the softly whispering fountains could be heard in the night silence. The song begins with phrases of conventional poetry:

"It is night: now all springing fountains speak louder.  
And my soul too is a springing fountain.

It is night: only now do all songs of lovers awaken, and my soul too is the song of a lover."

What follows, however, is less conventional: it is a confession:

"Something unsatisfied, insatiable, is in me, it wishes to become heard.

A desire for love is in me, which itself speaks the language of love."

Thus it is not love itself that moves him; he is not a lover, and in reality loves no one. But he has a vast longing to be a lover, to love and be loved. And so speaks as if he were a lover, as though by the illusion to bridge the gap that separates him from his fellows.

He is a bestower, he continues, but he cannot receive.



## NIETZSCHE

"I know not the happiness of the receiver ; and often have I dreamed that stealing must be more blessed than receiving."

"Oh, unhappiness of all bestowers ! Oh, darkening of my sun ! Oh, desire for desiring ! Oh, craving in satiety."

Thus even desire fails Zarathustra — there is nothing he wants from anyone. He gives to others, he thinks, but what do they make of the gift ?

"My happiness in bestowing", he adds, "died in bestowing, my virtue became weary of itself in its abundance."

Zarathustra has failed, and he resents his failure.

"A hunger grows out of my beauty : I should like to hurt those whom I enlighten, I should like to rob those to whom I make gifts — thus I hunger after wickedness."

He would like to be wicked, as he should like to love and be loved : he is thrilled by both thoughts. And he half convinces himself that he is wicked — a teasing, tormenting, irresponsible soul, holding back — capriciously, he pretends,— his great present, his fundamental message, the doctrine of the eternal recurrence.

"Withdrawing my hand, when another hand is already stretched out to it. — Thus I hunger after wickedness. . . . Such revenge my abundance thinks of, such malice wells up from my loneliness."

But Nietzsche recognised the real source of his disability : he is so full of his own message, so full of himself, that he cannot receive from others.

"Light am I : Oh, that I were night ! But it is my loneliness that I am girdled with light.

Oh, that I were dark and night-like ! How I would suck at the breasts of light."

There are, he recognises, other lights in the world ; but for him they exist in vain.

"Many suns circle in desolate space ; to all that is dark they speak with their light — to me they are silent.

Oh, this is the enmity of light to the luminous ; mercilessly it follows its path."

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

Is there not a cry to Deussen or to Wagner here ?

" Like a storm do the suns fly on their course, that is their travelling. Their relentless will do they follow : that is their coldness."

Wagner would not remould himself to Nietzsche's plan, nor could the illuminated Nietzsche follow Deussen or Schopenhauer or Rée or Wagner, nor indeed could he follow any teacher or light whatever.

And so, sitting aloft in the darkness in Rome with the whispering waters beneath him, Nietzsche knew that what shut him out from intercourse and happy communion with men was the self-assertion by means of which he shut them out from himself.

" Oh, ye only is it," he calls to those who do not function as lights of the world, " ye dark ones, ye night-like ones, who create warmth from him who enlightens ! Ye alone drink milk and refreshment from the udders of light !

Oh, there is ice around me, my hand is burning with the iciness. Oh, thirst is in me, longing for your thirst."

The same note thus recurs again. Nietzsche longs to thirst and desire as others do, just as he longs to love as they do. But there is no object to which his thirst, his desire, his love may be directed ; and his soul is empty. But imitating the language of love again, he closes the chapter as he began it :

" It is night : only now do all the songs of lovers awaken : And my soul too is the song of a lover ! "

The next chapter is called *The Dance Song*, and in it Zarathustra sings to a group of maidens in a meadow. He has disturbed them, and he appears gloomy to them ; but he protests that he is not so portentously sombre as he seems.

" I am indeed a forest," he says, " and a night of dark trees ; yet he who does not shrink from my darkness will find also rose-covered banks under my cypresses." And even Cupid rests there.

Zarathustra then sings of Life and of Wisdom, telling how they attract him, how they rebuff and disappoint him, and how

## NIETZSCHE

they are never more desirable than when they are most elusive and false.

The song is not so light-footed or rose-coloured as the maidens may have expected, and it is perhaps not strange that when it was over Zarathustra became sad, and even questioned the wisdom of continuing to live.

"Why? Wherefore? Whereby? Whither? Where? How? Is it not folly to go on living?"

Zarathustra then apologises: "Ah, my friends, it is evening which thus questions from me. Forgive me my sadness!"

Evening came on: forgive me that evening came on."

The following chapter, entitled *The Grave Song*, is a natural outcome of this mood; it shows more clearly than any other passage how Nietzsche regretted his lost past, and how his sorrow at the renunciations he had been forced to make rose at times to angry resentment.

His past is dead, he says, but to it he will carry an evergreen wreath of life: he will not forget it. It still gleams of love in his eyes, a gleam and a love which died too soon, and for which a longing overcomes him.

"From you, my dearest dead," he says, "there comes a sweet fragrance, loosening my heart and my tears. Verily it makes the lonely seafarer tremble and loosens his heart."

"Verily, too swiftly did ye die from me, ye fugitive ones. Yet ye did not flee from me, nor did I flee from you: we are innocent to one another in our faithlessness."

There is an implication here which Nietzsche proceeds to develop. The loss of his early ideals is not his fault, nor that of the ideals themselves; and so, following the practice of men in all ages, he declares that there are wicked people abroad, who out of malice towards him have slain his ideals!

"To kill me they strangled you, ye singing birds of my hopes. Yes, at you, ye dearest ones, wickedness ever shot arrows — to hit my heart.

And they hit it."

It is to be noticed here that Nietzsche is quite prepared to

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

believe in the "wickedness" of others and to feel duly indignant at it. He then proceeds to be more specific — the evil ones are his enemies.

"But this word will I say to my enemies : what is all manslaughter in contrast with that which ye have done to me !

A more evil thing have ye done to me than any manslaughter ; what ye have taken from me is irrecoverable : — thus do I speak to you, my enemies.

For ye have murdered the visions and dearest wonders of my youth ! Ye have taken from me my playmates, the blessed spirits ! To their memory I bring this wreath and this curse.

This curse upon you, my enemies. For ye have made my eternity short, as a tone breaks off in a cold night."

These unspecified wicked ones who robbed him of his hope of eternal life have also turned his dearest ones, even his disciples, against him.

"And when I did what was hardest for me and celebrated the victory of my conquests, ye made those who loved me cry that I hurt them most."

Of Wagner, too, he has been robbed :

"And once when I would dance, as I had never danced ; away over every heaven I would dance, then ye lured away my dearest singer. And now he has begun to sing a dreadful gloomy air. Oh, he sounds in my ear like a mournful horn."

Nietzsche's resentment then turns partly against Wagner too, although he is held not to be ultimately responsible :

"Murderous singer, instrument of evil, most innocent one. I was all ready for my best dance : then you slew my rapture with your tones."

An interesting statement follows :

"Only in the dance can I speak the parable of the highest things : — and now my highest parable remains unspoken in my limbs.

Unspoken, unreleased, has my highest hope remained. And all the visions and consolations of my youth have died for me."

In the earlier chapters of the book Nietzsche's dissatisfaction

## NIETZSCHE

with the majority of his fellow men and with almost all existing institutions is again expressed in several forms and at considerable length.

The Church offends him. His father had been a clergyman, and so by blood he feels related to the priestly caste and he would therefore deal lightly with its members. But they have imprisoned minds, and are ensnared by false values. He likes neither them nor their piety.

"Verily, I would rather see the shameless one than the upturned eyes of their shame and devotions."

From the servants Nietzsche passes to the founders of religions. The so-called saviours of the world, he says, are without exception products of emotional folly.

"Sultry heart and cold head : where these meet there arises the enthusiast, the saviour."

None of the saviours who have yet appeared has really risen above the level of the mob ; Nietzsche did not love the mob.

"Truly there have been greater ones and more highly born, than those whom the people call saviours, those enrapturing enthusiasts.

And by greater ones than any saviour has been, must ye, my brothers, be saved, if ye would find the way to freedom."

From priests and prophets and would-be saviours, Nietzsche turns to the populace and is at once moved by excited abhorrence. The people are dirty, he exclaims, and he does not like dirt.

"To all that is clean I am kind ; but I do not like to see the grinding jaws and the thirst of the unclean."

Nor is he alone, he declares, in this attitude. Some who seem to have turned away from life have merely turned away from the rabble and "many a one who has gone into the wilderness and suffered thirst with beasts of prey, wished only not to sit round the cisterns with dirty camel-drivers".

Nietzsche claims, however, that now, away from the mob, he has overcome his loathing. He has "flown to the height where the rabble no longer sits at the wells".

Naturally, all doctrines of equality arouse Nietzsche's scorn ;

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

their promoters are stigmatised as Tarantulas and are appropriately trodden under foot. The worlds of scholars and of specialists are also condemned although with less passion. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, of course, is not forgotten, the sheep that ate Nietzsche's laurel, nor is his criticism of *The Birth of Tragedy*, which played its part in separating Nietzsche from the world of scholars.

Isolated, rejected and rejecting, Zarathustra thus is in a far from happy state, but he insists that his misery cannot be lightened by pity : on the contrary, pity heightens it. Nietzsche's doctrine regarding pity may have been borrowed in part from Spinoza, but it is given a twist by Nietzsche that is personal to himself. For Spinoza pity implies a feeling of sadness, and sadness is essentially an evil ; it should therefore be avoided and we should help others cheerfully and without tears. For Nietzsche the position is different. Pity, for him, is an evil because it humiliates the person pitied ; and behind his view there is a violent resentment against any sense of inferiority. Of course, Nietzsche was not without the bowels of ordinary human compassion. Indeed, in some ways he was unduly sensitive and might well have adopted Spinoza's view. Thus, for example, when he heard in July 1880 that Mommsen's house had been burned down, he wrote to Peter Gast : " My heart turned round in my body, and even now I suffer physically when I think of it. Is that pity ? But what is Mommsen to me ? " But Nietzsche's main doctrine is that pity humiliates, it is an exercise and demonstration of power by the person who pities and implies superiority over the victim pitied.

" Oh, my friends," Zarathustra exclaims, " so speaks he who knows. Shame, shame, shame — that is the story of man.

And therefore the noble one enjoins on himself not to make ashamed : he enjoins shame on himself in the presence of all sufferers.

Verily, I like them not, the compassionate ones, who find bliss in pitying : too greatly do they lack shame."

Speaking of himself, he says : " When I saw the sufferer

## NIETZSCHE

suffering, I was ashamed on account of his shame, and when I helped him, then sorely did I offend against his pride". Nietzsche's doctrine here arose from his own experience, from the humiliation he felt in being pitied. After the quarrel with Lou Salomé, Mrs. Overbeck wrote to Nietzsche explaining things to him and giving him what she thought was kindly good advice. She pitied him in his distress and sought to help. Nietzsche resented this. People, he said, meaning primarily, but not exclusively, Mrs. Overbeck, "fall on me with their admonitions, and let out their feeling of power on me".<sup>1</sup> People obviously lacked the proper sense of shame. Nietzsche felt this deeply, and reverted to it in another letter. "When I complain, all the world thinks it has a right to let out a bit of its feeling of power on me as a sufferer; it is called exhortation, sympathy, good advice, etc."<sup>2</sup>

Zarathustra's teaching thus far has been almost entirely negative, but behind it there are some positive elements which, although only half formulated, and not reconciled with one another, provide a little standing ground.

The first of these we may link up with the attitude to pity which we have just considered. Nietzsche speaks of the injury which pity does to his pride, and the conception of pride which is in his mind is one borrowed from Schopenhauer, who distinguished it from vanity in a way followed by Nietzsche himself. "Pride", said Schopenhauer, "is the conviction, already firmly established, of one's own surpassing worth; vanity, on the contrary, is the wish to arouse such a conviction in others, generally accompanied by the silent hope of being able, as a consequence of this, to make it also one's own. Accordingly, pride is a high valuation of oneself which goes outward from within, and thus is direct, vanity on the contrary is the effort to obtain this from without and so indirectly. As a consequence vanity makes one talkative, pride silent."<sup>3</sup>

Wagner, Nietzsche thought, was vain, and so Nietzsche was

<sup>1</sup> To his sister: beginning of Aug. 1883.

<sup>2</sup> End of Aug. 1883.

<sup>3</sup> *Parerga*, vol. iv, p. 403.

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

prepared to condescend a little to him, and forbearingly excuse him in virtue of the diverting spectacle he afforded, and of his ultimate inherent modesty — a modesty of which Wagner himself was unconscious. The passage, of course, is a malicious stab at Wagner, endeavouring to identify the superiority which Wagner showed openly, with an inner inferiority — the unconscious modesty of which Nietzsche speaks. In contrast with Wagner, Nietzsche was no actor, and stood silent in the busy stir of intercourse, self-contained and sure of his own inner superiority. Or at least so he wished to feel. And there can be little doubt that he united this rather enforced silence and alienation with the claim to an aristocratic nature and inheritance. He was, in fact, not an aristocrat in any literal sense, but he wished to be one; and overlooking as far as possible his thoroughly respectable middle-class ancestry, he gazed back to the doubtful Polish count from whom he wanted to be descended. His father too, ordinary clergyman as he was, had had a reverence for courts and titles which raised him in Nietzsche's eyes, and at times almost placed him among the *élite*.

And so the conception of the aristocrat enters at this stage into Nietzsche's conception of Zarathustra, the Superman. The idea is not clear, and in reality it involves a social system and cultural *milieu* against which alone it can be defined. These are lacking here. But the ideas of inward superiority, of good birth, good breeding, refinement and separation from the lower mob are an essential part of it. We shall consider it more fully later.

Another conception put forth in this second part of *Zarathustra* is connected with the ideal of the aristocrat, viz. the Apollonian conception of art and beauty which Nietzsche owed to Schopenhauer. The great man, the aristocrat, the hero, although powerful and even ruthless, must also be magnanimous; as Nietzsche was trying to be to Wagner. But magnanimity is not mere kindness, it involves grace and beauty. But beauty is hard for the ordinary strong man or hero to attain, for it is incompatible with violent, passionate willing. Beauty requires some abstinence



from action, it requires balance and repose. "A little more, a little less," says Zarathustra, "precisely this is much here, it is everything. To stand with relaxed muscles and with unharnessed will : that is hardest for all of you, ye heroes.

When power becomes gracious and descends into the visible : beauty is the name I give to such a descent.

And from no one do I want just beauty so much as from thee, thou powerful one : let thy goodness be thy final self-overcoming." But Nietzsche cannot remain at this level, for though his soul hungered after it, and in great measure it seemed within his reach, yet he knew it was apt to be a pose, a surface deceit, a merely Apollonian distortion of things. And deeper than the desire for grace and beauty there lay in his mind at this stage the lust for power : Apollo gave way to Dionysus.

Thus it is that we find a different view of beauty itself briefly stated two chapters later. After a violent denunciation of passionless contemplation Zarathustra asks, "Where is beauty?" and answers : "Where I must *will* with all my will ; where I am willing to love and perish in order that an image may not remain only an image". Beauty is action — will in action.

Power, and the will to power, Zarathustra proclaims, are the secret of all things. Schopenhauer had proclaimed *will* to be the principle of life. Nietzsche sets him aside. "Certainly he did not hit truth who shot at it the word of 'will to existence'. This will does not exist." "Whenever I found a living thing," says Zarathustra, "there I found will to power, and even in the will of him who serves I found the will to be master." Everything is now brought under this formula. "Where there is sacrifice and service and glances of love : there too is the will to be master. By secret paths does the weaker one slip into the castle and right into the heart of the mightier one — and steals power there." Power is beyond life itself, for life sacrifices itself for power. Power is beyond good and evil, beyond all other standards of value, beyond all other ideals. These standards and ideals are ultimately only means to it.

"With your values and words of good and evil you exercise

## THE RETICENT PROPHET

power, ye valuers ; and this is your hidden love and the shining, trembling and overflowing of your souls."

Power then is the end, and power arises from the will. It is from this point of view that Nietzsche seeks to rise above his distresses. In the Grave Song after he has proclaimed his woes, he continues : " How did I bear it ? How did I survive and overcome such wounds ? How did my soul rise again out of these graves ?

Yes, something invulnerable, unburialable, is in me, something able to break rocks in pieces ; it is called *my will*. It marches silently and unchanged through the years. Its course will it go on my feet, my old will ; its purpose is hard of heart and invulnerable."

Towards the end of the book Zarathustra has need of this will. He recounts a dream — the coffin dream we may call it. He had become the night-watchman of a burial crypt and was living among the coffins. Then there came a mighty summons at the entrance, the rusty gates were torn open by a storm-wind and a black coffin was thrust into the crypt. The coffin suddenly burst open amid ghastly mocking laughter, and a thousand caricatures of children, angels, owls, fools and vast butterflies came out of it, mocking and shouting at Zarathustra who fell to the ground in terror.

One of the disciples then offers a comforting interpretation of this dream but Zarathustra does not accept it. The deeper meaning which Nietzsche intended to convey would appear to involve a fear of life itself, a revulsion from it, and a horror at the still undisclosed thought that each individual existence must recur again and again ceaselessly. In the following chapter the same underlying theme appears again with almost equal obscurity. Life is miserable, fragmentary, defective, how can it be redeemed ? In particular, how can the past be redeemed and its fragments put together ?

Apparently no solution is possible ; for the past is gone and is beyond the reach of the will. But to this contention Nietzsche has a reply, although he is not yet prepared to state it clearly.

## NIETZSCHE

The will can accept life, and it can even accept the past ; for the past comes again, recurring in the future. In this sense, Zarathustra maintains, the will can will backwards ; it can accept the past which is yet to come.

But at this point the paradoxical argument ceases, for Zarathustra becomes overwhelmed by terror at the thought of having to relive the past. He cannot face it again ; he dare not will it. And this benumbing dread persists to the end of the section. Life is so offensive to Zarathustra that he is still unwilling to proclaim its eternal recurrence, and hence this part ends as did the first, in the refusal of the prophet to proclaim his gospel. Zarathustra, we are told, " wept aloud ; and no one knew how to comfort him. In the night, however, he went forth alone and left his friends."

## XXI

### APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

IN the third part of *Zarathustra* Nietzsche's thought reaches a climax ; and at times even in an artistic regard he attains as high a level as in anything else he had yet written. Of course there is much in it that is not new, for on many things, perhaps on most, he has nothing fresh to say ; after all, he has already sufficiently emphasised his loneliness, his remoteness from his fellows, his abandonment of old standards, his contempt for the smugness of small men, and his dislike of the satisfaction people find in their ordinary occupations in life. All that has been said, and the repetition of it is by itself just barely tolerable. But beyond it, beyond all that is old, there is a development of Nietzsche's own thought and a revelation of his inmost aspirations and longings that lifts the book above his previous writings.

Fundamentally it is a religious document, giving the theology of Zarathustra, the godless. The underlying and dominating theme is the eternal recurrence, now acknowledged and explicitly proclaimed ; but along with it there are other themes by means of which alone that conception is made tolerable. Nietzsche goes back to his earlier religious beliefs, first to Dionysus and then to Christianity, and he borrows from both to make his new religion.

We may begin with the eternal recurrence itself. It is set forth in the second chapter by Zarathustra. A dwarf — the personification of the spirit of heaviness — has been oppressing him, and to the depression thus produced in his mind, Zarathustra replies by a challenge, by a defiant appeal to courage, that is to say, to the indomitable will which was his refuge in the previous book. " Courage ", he says to the dwarf, " is the best slayer,

## NIETZSCHE

courage which attacks ; it slays even death, for it says : ' Was that life ? Very well ! Once more ! ' " And in explanation of this last statement Zarathustra expounds the doctrine of the eternal recurrence to the dwarf, who by his comment — " time itself is a circle " — shows that he is already aware of it. " Look at this moment," says Zarathustra in annoyance at being forestalled, " from this gateway, this moment, a long eternal road runs back ; behind us lies an eternity.

Must not whatever of all things *can* run already have some time run along this road ? Must not whatever of all things *can* happen already sometime have happened, been done, gone past ?

. . . And this slow spider, which creeps in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things, must we not all already have existed ? "

We have already seen that at times Nietzsche was appalled by this doctrine, and, shrinking from it in dread, forbore to proclaim it. Now, in proclaiming it, he makes his horror explicit. He represents the conception symbolically as a heavy black snake, which, having entered the mouth of a young sleeping shepherd — Nietzsche himself — took a fast hold, while the shepherd writhed and choked in agony. " Have I never seen ", exclaims Zarathustra, " so much loathing and pale fear on one countenance ?

My hand pulled at the snake and pulled : — in vain ! It did not pull the snake out of the throat. Then came a cry from me : ' Bite ! Bite !

Its head off ! Bite ! ' So the cry came from me ; my fear, my hatred, my loathing, my compassion, all that was good and bad in me, cried with one cry out of me."

The picture is grisly enough, but it does not stand alone. In a later chapter, entitled *The Convalescent*, Zarathustra is represented as waking from sleep like a madman, crying with a fearful voice, and gesticulating as if there were still someone on the bed who did not wish to get up. He had been thinking — or

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

dreaming — of his deepest conception, “his most abysmal thought”, “the eternal circle”, and he apostrophises it thus :

“Hail to me ! Thou comest,—I hear thee. My abyss *speaks*, my last depth have I turned out into the light !

Hail to me ! Come here ! Give me thy hand . . . ha !  
Let go ! Haha ! . . . Disgust, disgust, disgust . . . woe is me

Zarathustra then collapses, remaining prostrate and unconscious for a week.

There can thus be little doubt that Nietzsche found great emotional difficulty in the conception of the eternal recurrence. Man himself is so petty a thing, so little worthy of respect even at his best, that the thought of his eternal infinite repetition is unendurable.

“Ah, man for ever returns again ! The small man for ever returns again ! ”

This perhaps is on the surface the main objection — the eternal perpetuation of the small man. But even the great man is small.

“Naked had I once seen both of them, the greatest man and the smallest man : all too alike one another,—all too human, even the greatest. . . .

Ah, disgust ! disgust ! disgust ! . . . ”

And the disgust is at the whole human race.

How is this disgust to be overcome ? How is the immortality of endless repetition to be made tolerable ? Of course, an appeal may be made to blind will, to mere courage, and, as we have seen, Nietzsche occasionally does make this appeal as if there were nothing else left for him to do. Life is horrible, it is true, nevertheless if we accept it we can declare it good — even in its horror and pain. But this solution, if it can be called one, is unsatisfying, and cannot stand alone. If the acceptance is to make life good, then the horror of life must be destroyed, the criticisms of it must become untrue, and the scorn and indignation must be unjustified. A will which could accept life as it is — or at least as it appeared to Nietzsche — without value or grandeur, would

## NIETZSCHE

be merely perverse obstinacy and not a redeeming principle at all. Life, then, must be transfigured, be made beautiful and great. How can this be done ?

Nietzsche seeks one solution, the most obvious one, through the conception of the Superman. The human race is essentially a transitional form, it must vanish and give place to the higher beings to come. In himself futile, as a stage to the Superman man has a relative justification and may be tolerated.

This conception has the advantage of bringing Nietzsche's two main ideas together. At first sight they appear in conflict with one another : unchanging repetition, and progress to perfection. Now they unite ; for what is repeated is something which, beginning in lowly fashion, goes forwards towards perfection, and the progress and development enrich the universe infinitely. This is the meaning, Nietzsche would urge, of the demand that man should transcend himself, and become a bridge to a higher type, the demand for a severe and final form of self-abnegation which otherwise might seem in sharp conflict with the general tenor of Nietzsche's thought.

From this point of view Nietzsche calls for a new nobility, one which does not look back to ancient courts, traditions, and established systems, but forward to the future.

" Oh my brothers, not backward shall your nobility look, but *outward*. Exiles shall ye be from all lands of your fathers and forefathers ! Your children's land shall ye love : let this love be your nobility — the undiscovered in the farthest seas. . . .

To your children are ye to make amends for being children of your fathers : all the past shall ye thus redeem."

The solution, however, which this conception suggests of the main problem with which we are concerned at present does not really satisfy Nietzsche. The noble of the future, whether he is a Superman or only a stage to the Superman, is no doubt very well in himself, but he does not fully meet Nietzsche's need. The fundamental difficulty about him is that he is in the future ; and that he is someone else. And although Nietzsche tends at times to confound himself, and Zarathustra, and the

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

Superman with one another, he is too profoundly conscious of his own actual condition to be permanently deceived by the confusion. Man is to be transcended, and Nietzsche is a man. When he is transcended man will be justified — to the higher race which succeeds him. But how can that fate satisfy man himself? In particular, how can it satisfy Nietzsche? Nietzsche is thus forced to claim for himself a more immediate victory over the evil of life — for his own life will recur endlessly, and has to be endlessly justified to him, and not only to a future race. Victory must come to him now in the midst of his weakness, inferiority and pain.

This demand is an old one : it is perhaps the fundamental demand of religion, the demand not merely for a recompense in the future, although that also is often asked for and promised, but rather for a redemption here and now in this present world. And in response to it men in many ages of different faiths have claimed an immediate unity with the divine, which even in their distress and finitude transforms them and in some measure makes them themselves divine. If this is a religious attitude, then the third part of *Zarathustra* is a religious book. We saw in an earlier chapter how, as a young man in the first flush of his original thought, Nietzsche developed for himself a Dionysian religion, in which the central figure, Dionysus, was no mere metaphor, but a real being, indeed the ultimate reality. And it was by identification of himself with the god in Dionysian rapture that the worshipper rose above fate and became master of the world.

Dionysus is dead, and he does not rise again now ; but his place is empty and Nietzsche endeavours to fill it. In considering how he does so we may refer to a passage in the second part of *Zarathustra* :

“ But that I may reveal my heart wholly to you, ye friends,” says Zarathustra : “ if there were gods, how could I endure not to be a god ! Therefore there are no gods.”

This is candid and startling, but Nietzsche now goes beyond it. The old gods are dead : they died, he says, in mocking laughter.



## NIETZSCHE

"That took place when the most godless word proceeded from a God himself,—the word : 'There is one God ! Thou shalt have no other God besides me' — an old grim-beard of a God, a jealous one, forgot himself thus :

And then all the gods laughed and shook on their thrones and cried : 'Is godliness not just that there are gods, but no God?'

He who hath ears," adds Zarathustra, "let him hear."

There is no supreme God, but there are or may be gods, and Nietzsche is resolved to set himself on a vacant throne. He does this in the chapter entitled *Before Sunrise*. The subject of the chapter is the clear starry vault of heaven, the empty throne of Zeus, and also Wotan, and perhaps of many another beside.

"Oh heaven above me, thou pure one ! Thou deep one ! Thou abyss of light ! Beholding thee I tremble with divine desire.

To cast myself into thy height — that is my depth ! To hide myself in thy purity — that is my innocence."

Although the heaven is high above him, Zarathustra will exalt himself to it, he will claim kinship with it and make himself equal to it.

"We have been friends from the beginning : to us dread and dismay and depth are in common : even the sun is common to us.

We do not speak to each other, because we know too much : — we are silent to each other, we smile our knowledge to each other.

Art thou not the light to my fire ? Hast thou not the sister soul to my insight ?

Together did we learn everything ; together did we learn to ascend above us to ourselves and to smile uncloudedly : —

— uncloudedly to smile down out of gleaming eyes and out of a remote distance, when under us restraint and purpose and guilt steam like rain."

Intervening clouds, obscuring the sky and weakening Zarathustra's feeling of unity with it, arouse his detestation and anger :

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

"Often have I longed to fasten them together with jagged wires of golden lightning, that like thunder I might beat the drum on their kettle-bellies."

This is a reminiscence of Wotan, and shows the position in which Zarathustra would place himself. Indeed, all the passages quoted are noteworthy for the claim to equality and reciprocity involved in them. Zarathustra feels he is worthy of the empyrean height to which he aspires. Long has he struggled upwards, climbing wearily over the rocks; but now with ease and at a bound he has risen above everything, above strife, above necessity, above fear and guilt, above law and obligation. Raised thus aloft he looks down on life in a new way and he blesses it.

"I am a bleaser and a yea-sayer when thou art but around me, thou pure one, thou luminous one! Thou abyss of light — into all abysses I carry now my yea-saying blessing. . . .

But this is my blessing: to stand over everything as its own heaven, as its round roof, its azure bell and eternal security: and blessed is he who thus blesses."

Nietzsche connects this claim to divinity — for such it is — with freedom from law, obligation, and purpose.

"Above all things stands the heaven chance, the heaven innocence, the heaven accident, the heaven arrogance."

There is no purpose in the world, no law; and Zarathustra transcends all purpose and law. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche took a similar view. Like a child building sand castles and knocking them down again at his own good pleasure, the God makes and destroys the things in the world. This God has now disappeared, but by proclaiming the irresponsible irrational nature of the process, Zarathustra feels as if he had taken the place of the God and set himself in his seat above all bonds.

"Oh heaven above me, thou pure one! Thou high one! This is to me thy purity that there is no eternal reason-spider and reason-cobweb: —

— that thou art to me a dancing floor for divine chances, that thou art to me a divine table for divine dice and dice players."

To a sky god raised above law and revelling in chance as if

chance were his own doing, life has a divine joy, and the eternal return is an acceptable doctrine. Immortality is tolerable for a God.

But this solution — born of intense excitement and exultation — is not enduring, and Nietzsche does not fully adhere to it. In place of it he develops a different conception. The height of heaven is too great and he may fall : so the dwarf, the spirit of gravity, told Zarathustra, and this idea of falling, of perishing, present in some degree from the outset, begins to play a larger part in Nietzsche's thought. Dionysus was a mortal god and was torn in pieces : and this old legend may have influenced Nietzsche in regarding himself, the Dionysian, as fated to some similar lot. But even if this were so it is not all ; a deeper element creeps into his mind ; and he tends to identify himself with the suffering God of his earliest religious belief. Nietzsche had suffered greatly, and he was loath to regard the suffering as useless, as mere loss. In some way he seeks to make it necessary, to give it a place in the scheme of things as something ultimately turning to his glory.

"In *our* power", he says in a note, "lies the turning of suffering into blessing, of poison into nourishment. Will to suffer."<sup>1</sup>

Of course, many moralists have spoken of the value of suffering to the human soul, how it tests and purifies and leads to higher things. But Nietzsche has no such moral conception in mind. Suffering, the inevitable suffering due to physical causes, he seeks to lift out of the field to which it properly belongs, to raise it above fate and necessity ; that is what he means when he speaks of the "will to suffer". And he seeks to do this by identifying himself with the Christ of the Gospels, who suffered the death of the cross that man might live. Thus he assimilates himself as far as he can to Christ.

"Oh my brothers, someone once saw into the heart of the good and just, and said : 'They are the Pharisees'. But he was not understood. . . . The good *must* be Pharisees,—they have no choice !

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xiv, p. III.

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

The good *must* crucify him, who finds out his own virtue !  
That is the truth !

The second one, however"—and now Zarathustra, or Nietzsche, speaks of himself—"who discovered their country, the land, law, heart and soil of the good and just, he it was who asked : ' whom do they hate most ? ' "

And, of course, the answer is that they hate most of all the breaker of the old tables and the old values, that is to say, Zarathustra himself. " The good ", he adds, " crucify him who writes new values and new tables, they sacrifice the future to themselves — they crucify all human future."

And so the suffering of Zarathustra tends to leave its ordinary physical source in Nietzsche's ailing body and become the suffering of the persecuted one, the suffering of the crucified. And as Christ died in delivering His message, so too must Zarathustra perish through the utterance of his gospel.

The sky god thus is abandoned, whether he be Apollo or Zeus or Wotan or another : Nietzsche feels that in the end such a one is a god of the starry sky, the empty vault of heaven, and that he fades in the daylight. In him there is no room for suffering, pain and death : all these things lie beneath him and he exults over them. In contrast with him, the dying God, the Saviour, the Christ, carries within himself that mortality from which there is no escape and makes it divine.

" Thou fate of my soul ", Zarathustra prays, " which I call fate ! Thou In-me, Over-me ! Preserve and spare me for one great fate . . . that I may be ready and ripe in the great noon-tide . . .

— ready for myself and my most hidden will : a bow eager for its arrow, an arrow eager for its star —

— a star, ready and ripe in its noontide, shining, pierced, blessed by the destroying arrows of the sun —

— a sun itself, and an inexorable sun-will ready to be destroyed in victory.

Oh Will, change of every need, thou *my* necessity ! Spare me for one great victory ! "

## NIETZSCHE

There is, of course, no real logical coherence in Nietzsche's doctrine. There is no reason why the announcement of his gospel should lead to his own destruction : and he did not condemn himself to death by declaring it.

He might indeed claim to be despised and rejected of man, although "neglected" would have been a more accurate term to use. But there the persecution, if there was any, ceased, and no other danger threatened him. Nevertheless Zarathustra hardened himself in the belief that his doctrine would be fatal to him and did not reject the statement imputed to him :

"I have spoken my word, I am broken by my word : so wills my eternal fate — as preacher I perish."

The book ends with a chapter entitled *The Seven Seals*, in which the doctrine of the eternal return, the fatal doctrine, as it is now regarded, is fully accepted. The refrain of it runs thus :

"Oh how should I not be passionate for eternity and for the marriage of rings — the ring of the return !

Never have I found the woman from whom I wanted to have children, were it not this woman, that I love : for I love thee, oh eternity."

Eternity, of course, means here the eternal return, which produces no fresh being but merely repeats the old. Nietzsche thus is looking forward to himself as his own progeny, and it is with this ardent repeated declaration, implying that no one in the universe other than himself is worthy of perpetuation, a declaration possessing all the arrogance any god could desire, that the book comes to as solemn and impressive an end as Nietzsche can give it.

When he had written the third part of *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche thought he had finished the book ; it had ended with the final acceptance of the eternal recurrence in a Sevenfold Amen. But gradually his mind changed ; he felt the work to be incomplete and that it stopped in the middle, if indeed it got so far. He had spoken of the great noontide, but it had not yet been reached, and

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

even noontide marks off but half the day. Moreover, Zarathustra, as we have seen, is to die ; he has to suffer and perish in the triumphant declaration of his message. And so Nietzsche began to write a continuation, a sequel to the three parts already written. But there was a great difference. The first three parts were each written in a state of intense excitement and tension. Ideas came flooding into his mind during his daily walks, causing him to dance and grimace as he went along. They were written down later in the same day with little attempt to secure a logical sequence between the chapters into which they were arranged. But the sequel was to be more systematic ; it was planned rather than inspired, and was to consist of three sections which would become parts IV, V and VI of *Zarathustra*. Part IV was to deal with Zarathustra's relation to the "higher men" who had hitherto appeared, and recount his rejection of them. Part V was to depict the great Noontide. Zarathustra was to leave his cave, accompanied by his faithful animals, the eagle and snake, reinforced by a lion, and after a sad final farewell to the mountain cave, the little band was to march in festal procession to the city. There Nietzsche's manuscript stops, but apparently disciples were to appear ; Zarathustra was to preach at length, certainly to the disciples and possibly also to the populace. And then, in the sixth part, surrounded by his worshipping disciples he was to die. In spite of some marked and deliberate differences between the two stories, there can be no doubt of the intention to make this narrative run parallel to the account in the New Testament of the journey to Jerusalem and the death of Christ there.

But the plan was not fully carried out and only the fourth part was written. It contains twenty chapters, telling a more or less connected tale. Zarathustra has been living in his cave for many years and has become an elderly grey-haired man. Some day, he knows, a kingdom will be established by him, or through his influence, "a great distant human kingdom, the Zarathustra kingdom of a thousand years"—although other traditions are also present, the desire to copy the millennium of early Christian tradition is obvious—but the time has not yet come. Man can

## NIETZSCHE

come up to him, he declares, for he still awaits the sign that it is time for his going down ; " As yet I myself do not go under, as I must, among men " .

One day he has a visitor, described as the soothsayer, a name intended to indicate Schopenhauer. After a friendly but frank greeting by Zarathustra, Schopenhauer, in language which must have caused him himself considerable astonishment, draws Zarathustra's attention to a cry of distress coming from far below : it is the " higher man " who is calling, he tells Zarathustra, and he adds that he is going to seduce Zarathustra to the vice to which he is most prone, viz. pity. This is the text from which the sermon of the book sets out. The world is calling for help ; Zarathustra's heart is wrung by his sense of its need ; but although overcome momentarily by compassion, he sets his weakness aside, and gradually but resolutely refuses to help the human race. It is beyond redemption and he looks entirely to a new race in the future.

In working out this idea Nietzsche departs considerably from his original plan. He intended to bring a number of representative people to Zarathustra's cave — some eighteen classes of people are indicated — to let them voice their distress there. But this large gathering does not take place. Instead of it we have a smaller one of some nine people, two of whom are duplicates of one another, being both kings. In addition there is a donkey. At the soothsayer's suggestion, Zarathustra goes down to discover whence the cry for help comes — the distressful cry of " the higher man " . He apparently fails in his mission, but during his wandering, which lasts for most of the day, and includes a very short sleep at noontide, he meets several people whom he sends off to his cave. Firstly, he encounters two kings who have abdicated, and, accompanied by a pack-ass, are themselves looking for the " higher man " . Then he treads on a recumbent scientist at work, and nearly comes to blows with him. After that he runs across the magician Wagner at his old tricks, and on leaving him discovers an unnamed retired Pope. Next comes " the ugliest man " , the man who slew God, and

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

who, being ugly, is prone to decorate himself artificially. Then Zarathustra meets a voluntary beggar — found preaching to the cattle — another enigmatic figure, perhaps a Buddhist, perhaps a mendicant friar — even perhaps Gotama and St. Francis parodied at once. Lastly, Zarathustra is overtaken by his own wandering shadow, which startles and frightens him. He dismisses these beings one by one to his cave, and in the evening returns there himself. On his arrival he again hears the cry of distress, coming now from his own home. “It was a long manifold peculiar cry, and Zarathustra distinguished clearly that it was composed of many voices; although, heard from a distance, it might sound like the cry from a single mouth.”

The assembled company presents the loftiest types of men who have yet appeared, and it was their joint cry of need that Zarathustra had heard. They are collectively “the higher man” to whom the soothsayer referred. One of the two kings, addressing Zarathustra with great reverence, mentions the distress by which they have all been overtaken, stating that they have come to learn of him, they and others also — “the last remnant of God among men, that is : all the men of great yearning, of great disgust, of great satiety,

— all who do not wish to live unless they learn again to *hope* — unless they learn from thee, Oh Zarathustra, the great hope !”

Zarathustra replies eloquently but pointedly, rejecting the implied appeal. He candidly informs his guests, whom he has apparently invited there for the purpose, that although they are the “higher men” of the world, the best that has yet been produced, they are not good enough for him.

“Ye may indeed as a body be higher men,” he says, “but for me — ye are not high and strong enough !”

Nor is it possible to make anything of them ; they are not the stuff of which the Superman can be made. Hence they must be superseded.

“On your shoulders presses many a burden, many a recollection : many an evil dwarf squats in your corners. There is a concealed mob also in you.



And although ye are high and of a higher type : much in you is crooked and mis-shapen. There is no smith in the world who could hammer you right and straight for me."

They are not the people for whom he is waiting, they are not the disciples with whom he hopes to climb down for the last time. "Ye have come to me", he says, "only as a token that higher ones are already on their way to me —

— not the men of great yearning, of great disgust, of great satiety, and what ye call the remnant of God,

— no, no, three times no ! For *others* do I wait here in this mountain and will not lift my foot from it without them,

— for higher, stronger, more victorious, more hearty ones, such as are squarely built in body and soul ; *laughing lions* must come."

It must have given Nietzsche great satisfaction to display such power over the great ones of the earth, to parade them thus, berate them, and make them demonstrate their folly, and, having done so, show in himself the noble hardness of the Superman by rejecting them. Of course, in one way he had no choice. These great men, these higher ones, would have shown in reality no tendency to become his disciples, or even to listen to him at all ; and so from an artistic point of view he could not well let them come after him as true permanent followers. There were no disillusioned repentant kings in the neighbourhood, and neither the Kaiser nor the King of Italy would have been so obsequious as the two kings of Zarathustra's acquaintance. Nor was there much chance of any Pope, whether retired or in service, showing the necessary humility. And of the others, which could be expected to answer Nietzsche's invitation otherwise than by a derisive refusal or at best a stony stare ? And since Nietzsche's imagined guests would not in reality accept him, Nietzsche *cannot* ultimately accept them.

Nevertheless in thought and up to a point he has them at his mercy ; and so the narrative proceeds. With a jibe at the great pessimist's appreciation of the good things of life, Nietzsche allows the soothsayer to interrupt Zarathustra with the insistent

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

suggestion that refreshments should now be provided, and above all something to drink, wine. Zarathustra is a water drinker, but fortunately the kings have a barrel of wine with them ; and although Zarathustra has no bread, he has two lambs which are quickly slain and cooked for the supper. The mendicant objects to this diet, as he is a water drinker and a vegetarian, but Zarathustra, the courteous host, allows each to follow his own bent and taste, adding in explanation : " The best belongs to mine and to me ; and if we are not given it, then we take it : the best food, the purest air, the strongest thoughts, the fairest women ! "— a sentiment which appears to the kings to be an extraordinarily sensible idea to have occurred to a sage.

There is a strain of malice running through most of the narrative, directed most markedly at the magician, Wagner, but not leaving the others unscathed. Now, however, Nietzsche turns his wit against what he feels to be his greatest rival ; and in the scene just described, as well as in much of what follows, there is a studied parody of the story of the death of Christ. It is a parody and not an imitation. The meal to which the sooth-sayer's request leads is called the *Abendmahl*, a term which, although it may mean an evening meal, is also the word used for the communion service of the Protestant Church. Exact parallelism, however, is avoided. As we have seen, for Zarathustra's feast wine is demanded and supplied, but the other element is lacking — there is no bread. In place of it two lambs are provided, the lamb being, of course, another Christian symbol.

During the meal Zarathustra discourses at considerable length to his pseudo-disciples, giving them a truncated account of his career, and setting forth views with which we are already familiar. He does seem, however, to forget that he has already condemned his guests as beyond redemption, for he counsels them, telling them not to be righteous overmuch, not to aim too high, and to content themselves with the smaller perfections which they can find or achieve in the world. Earlier in *Zarathustra*, as well as in previous writings, Nietzsche had criticised chastity, treating it as a very doubtful virtue and praising its

## NIETZSCHE

opposite, voluptuousness. He and his kind, he had boasted in effect, were chaste, but that was a rather fortunate accident : it just happened that they had no taste to be otherwise. In the present context chastity is treated more definitely as a virtue, but the guests are advised not to lay too much stress on it.

"Be not virtuous beyond your powers ! . . ." says Zarathustra,

"And where the vices of your fathers are, do not there try to suggest that ye are saints.

He whose fathers were fond of women, or wine, or wild boars ; what would it be if he wanted chastity of himself ?

It would be a folly ! Verily it will be much, it seems to me, for such a one, if he is the husband of one or of two or three women."

Soon after this passage there follows a direct attack on the founder of Christianity.

"What has been the greatest sin hitherto here on earth ? Has it not been the word of him who said : Woe to those who laugh here ! . . .

He did not laugh enough : otherwise he would have loved us, the laughing ones ! But he hated and scorned us, he promised us wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Must one then curse immediately where one does not love ? That — seems to me bad taste. But he did so, this unconditioned one. He came from the mob."

It is unnecessary to comment on Zarathustra's after-dinner recollections of the Gospels, but it is interesting to note that he who had been acclaimed as a scion of the Royal House of David and also as the very Son of God, was not well enough born for Zarathustra. Zarathustra tells his guests to keep out of the way of all such unconditioned fellows. "They have heavy feet and sultry hearts : — they do not know how to dance."

Having put Christ in his place — among the greatest sinners — Zarathustra continues to instruct his guests, but we need not follow him at length. He explains how light-footed he is, how fond of dancing and flying, and how prone to joy and laughter.

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

He advises them to cheer up and to dance. "Laughter", he says, "have I sanctified ; ye higher men, please *learn* to laugh."

After supper Zarathustra goes out into the fresh air, leaving his guests to entertain themselves. The forceful magician, Wagner, seizes the opportunity to cast the spell of his music upon them, and bring them all back into a state of unsatisfied lustful melancholy : all save one, the scientist, who protests and condemns the magician's wickedness. Zarathustra returns and with a few words banishes the evil spirit again. The wandering shadow, Nietzsche's former *alter ego*, then sings a lengthy song, addressed in flattering terms to the dusky maidens of the African deserts, and concluding rather irrelevantly with Luther's words before the Diet of Worms : "I can do no other, so help me God."

When Zarathustra again leaves the cave, the guests quickly indulge in a fresh escapade ; they set the donkey in their midst and worship him. The caricature of the Christian Litany presented here is punctuated at appropriate intervals by the braying of the ass. At first Zarathustra is horrified — to find his guests relapsing so quickly into their old beliefs and practices, but learning through the testimony of the ugliest man that it is all really ridiculous nonsense, he approves of it and even encourages his guests to continue. If they repeat it, he says, they must do it for love of him, and he adds, quoting again in parody : This do "in remembrance of me".

There remain two chapters. The first of these, entitled *The Drunken Song*, gradually abandons the parody and becomes solemn and impressive. It reaches perhaps the highest level in the book. The change, however, is not abrupt and mocking echoes continue for some paragraphs. Zarathustra and his guests leave the cave late in the evening, and gaze at the moonlit landscape. "There at last they stood silently beside one another, nothing but old people, though with comforted brave hearts, and astonished in themselves that it was so well with them on earth."

## NIETZSCHE

Then the ugliest man, for whom Zarathustra seems to have developed a special liking, makes a confession, in recognition of Zarathustra. "All my friends, what do ye think? For the sake of this day *I* am content to have lived my entire life. . . . One day, one feast with Zarathustra has taught me to love the earth.

'Was *that* — life?' will I say to death. 'Well then, once more!'

My friends what do ye think? Will ye not like me say to death: 'Was *that* — life? For Zarathustra's sake, then! Once more.'

Then comes a pentecostal outpouring of enthusiasm, each guest showing his joy in his own way. "The old soothsayer, however," says Nietzsche, "danced with delight, and even if, as some narrators assert, he was then full of sweet wine, certainly he was also full of sweet life and had renounced all weariness."

At this point Zarathustra comes again to the forefront. After a passing attack of faintness, he hears the sound of a clock bell coming up from the valley; it is nearing midnight, he says, and what follows is a new *Night Song*.

The remainder of this chapter takes us back to what may be regarded as key chapters of the two previous books: *The Night Song* of Book II and *Before Sunrise* in Book III. Former themes are taken up, but in a changed spirit. The melancholy, the despairing melancholy, of Book II has gone. Mystery there is, and an absence of frivolity and light-heartedness: Zarathustra is in no dancing mood. But the final outcome is a deep, serious, affirming joy. The night sky too appears again here as a powerful motive, but the old arrogance has diminished. Zarathustra is more sensitive, less exalted, more human: he is not a god.

The theme is the eternal return, but it is approached gradually. The world is deep and its depth is hidden by the lustre of the petty day. Zarathustra is too sensitive for the ordinary world.

"Leave me! Leave me! I am too pure for thee. Do not touch me! Has my world not just become perfect?"

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

My skin is too pure for thy hands. Leave me, thou dull, clumsy, stupid day ! Is not midnight brighter ? . . .

Oh world, dost thou wish me ? Am I worldly to thee ? Am I spiritual to thee ? Am I divine ? But day and world, ye are too coarse,—

— get cleverer hands, grasp for deeper happiness, grasp for deeper unhappiness, grasp for some god or other, do not grasp for me.”

Zarathustra now is no god, but a sensitive soul, destined to suffering.

Nevertheless beyond the woe of the world is its joy, and joy demands that the whole of life, the entire scheme, evil as well as good, should be perpetuated. Nietzsche makes an interesting contrast here. On the one hand, he says : “ All that suffers wants to live, so that it may become ripe, and happy and longing, — longing for the more distant, the higher, the brighter. ‘ I want heirs, so says all that suffers, I want children, I do not want myself.’ ”

On the other hand, “ Joy does not want heirs, nor children. — Joy wants itself, it wants eternity, it wants recurrence, wants everything-eternally-the-same.”

Early in the song there is a note familiar to us, the indication by Zarathustra that there is more in his mind than he will tell. “ Rather will I die, die, than tell you what my midnight heart is thinking.” This mystery cannot be the eternal return, for that now is common knowledge. Immediately after the declaration a new topic is abruptly introduced : “ Who is to be the master of the world ? ” And after the question has been repeated, it is answered : “ The purest are to be the masters of the world, the most unknown, strongest, midnight-souls, which are brighter and deeper than any day ”. But although the theme is not carried further at present, enough has been said of it to prevent it from being the undisclosed mystery. The guess may be hazarded that the latter consists in the future passion of Zarathustra.

But be that as it may, Nietzsche draws the chapter to a close with the song which asserts the eternal return, a song, “ the name

## NIETZSCHE

of which is 'Once more', the meaning of which is 'To all Eternity'".

O Man, I pray,  
What doth the deepest midnight say ?  
" From sleep, from sleep,  
I woke — where dreaming deep I lay : —  
The world is deep,  
With depth not dreamed of by the day.  
Deep is its woe —,  
Joy's deeper still than woe can be :  
Woe sayeth : Go !  
But joy doth want eternity,  
Want deep, want deep eternity."

The final chapter is short. Zarathustra rises in the morning before his guests, his overnight enthusiasm for them greatly diminished. A flock of doves greet him, and then a powerful tawny lion comes to fawn upon him, a sign that disciples are at hand. At this moment the guests come out, and appalled by the lion, flee in terror from the scene. Zarathustra sees them go without remorse. He recollects the soothsayer's boast : " I come to seduce thee to thy last sin " ; and he angrily rejects the temptation — to pity.

" The lion has come," he shouts, " my children are near, Zarathustra has grown ripe, my hour has come.

This is *my* morning, my day breaks : arise now, arise now, thou great Noontide ! "

But the great Noontide does not come ; for here the book ends and there is no sequel. In the notes which Nietzsche left behind him there are several sketch plans of the way in which it might have been carried to completion. Various stage accessories are introduced : plague, a volcano, a fire, a class war, the institution of a caste system, a woman who wants to murder Zarathustra ; but none of them is artistically convincing. Nietzsche seems to have been especially embarrassed by the death of Zarathustra, and a dozen suggestions for it are offered by him. Zarathustra dies beside the volcano amid a group of children ; he dies of

## APOTHEOSIS AND THE UNFINISHED MISSION

grief at the sorrow he has caused ; he dies of pity — pity for the woman who tries to stab him and even of pity for the pity she comes to feel for him ; he dies surrounded by his disciples ; he dies abandoned by everyone, and even because he has been abandoned ; he dies of joy because the multitude has accepted his message. According to one suggestion his snake bites him, the other animals fall afighting, and he dies amid their strife. In some versions he dies blessing himself and all others. Sometimes when he has been abandoned, he is accorded a magnificent funeral.

But how is any one of these plans to be carried out except as a mere pious banality, and above all, how is the sense of destiny, of redemption, of death in victory and victory in death to be obtained ? Zarathustra was no Christ, and could not die as one. What else could he do ? Nietzsche did not know.



## XXII

### THE WITHDRAWN SOUL

AFTER the completion of the fourth book of *Zarathustra* in February 1885 Nietzsche fell into a state of dejection. There were several reasons for this, physical and mental. "Your cheerful letters", he wrote to his sister on the 12th of the month, "are very welcome to me, I wish I could serve you with similar pieces of cheer and festivity. But in Nice this winter there is much to object to, and if I wished to begin to tell of it, you would get the most tedious litany in the world. The most stupid thing is (1) my eyes — (2) the constant (almost constant) *pain* in the small of my back, with a radiation down to my right hip. This is so severe that it ever and ever again makes me ask whether I can come to Germany this year at all. It is a sort of sudden attack of rheumatism. Travelling has become a torture to me beyond anything you can picture to yourself. . . ." About a fortnight later in another letter he said that he could bear his afflictions so long as he was well, adding: "Unfortunately I am often ill and take the old medicine — and then I hate unspeakably everyone I have come to know — myself included". The old medicine is, of course, the chloral hydrate which he began to use as a remedy against sleeplessness in 1882 after his rupture with his family. The letter goes on: "My dear sister, a word between us — and you can burn the letter afterwards — I beg you to do so — if I did not take pains to be a bit of an actor, I could not endure living even for an hour, at least not here in the town of herd animals".

But Nietzsche had troubles other than his ill-health. He had experienced difficulty in getting *Zarathustra* printed. The publisher, Schmeitzer, had shown little enthusiasm, he had been dilatory, he had even put this living, vibrating new gospel aside

## THE WITHDRAWN SOUL

to print not only a large order of Christian hymn-books — half a million of them — but also an Anti-Semitic pamphlet. The delays drove Nietzsche to fury, a state of mind not alleviated by the publisher's tactless suggestion that Nietzsche now had no friends at all and that the public refused to read his aphorisms. When the first three parts of *Zarathustra* fell almost dead from the press, Nietzsche broke with Schmeitzer, and after a vain search for a new publisher printed forty copies of the fourth part of *Zarathustra* at his own expense, to be given away to those faithful ones who would understand it. Only seven copies were presented in all.

Another disappointment arose from the loss of a possible disciple. A young Privatdozent from Halle, Freiherr Heinrich von Stein, at the age of twenty had written under a pseudonym a small volume entitled *The Ideals of Materialism : Lyrical Philosophy*. Nietzsche saw this work and praised it. In October 1882, when Nietzsche was staying at Leipzig after his family quarrel, Stein, encouraged by Paul Rée, called on him, but unfortunately found him not at home. Nietzsche, however, was gratified by the visit, and sent Stein a copy of *The Joyful Wisdom*, to which the latter replied by sending the sheets of a work he had in the press, entitled *Heroes and the World*. A slight correspondence was kept up between the two, and in August 1884 Stein spent three days with Nietzsche at Sils-Maria. During the first two days Nietzsche was unwell, prostrated by headaches, but on the third day he recovered ; and he and his visitor made a good impression on one another. Nietzsche afterwards spoke highly of Stein, declaring that they were akin in spirit, and hoping that Stein would become assimilated to him as a true disciple. But the hope was a delusion. Stein was a Wagnerian, and in spite of all Nietzsche's blandishments he remained an intimate member of Cosima's circle after Wagner's death in 1883. Nietzsche then began to lose patience with him. In January 1885 he wrote to his sister : " What an obscure letter the good Stein has written me ! And all to thank me for sending him a poem. No one knows now how to behave." A little later Nietzsche's

## NIETZSCHE

sister forwarded a letter of Stein's, which seems to have suggested that some kind of help should be given by Nietzsche in a Wagner project. Nietzsche was vastly annoyed, and poured out his wrath on his sister. "When I read your letter, I again realised why some clever people think I am mad or tell that I shall die in the asylum. Do you really believe that Stein's employments, which I would not have undertaken even at the time of my worst Wagnerism and Schopenhauerism, have an importance like the immense task which lies on me? (I cannot conceive at all how you could send me his letter.) Or do you think it in accordance with my dignity to solicit his friendship? I am much too proud ever to believe that a human being could love *me*. That would presuppose that he knew *who I am*. Just as little do I believe that I could ever love anyone: that would presuppose that — miracle upon miracle — I had found a human being of my own standing. — Don't forget that I despise as well as pity such beings as Richard Wagner and A. Schopenhauer on a few personal grounds and that I feel even the founder of Christianity to be superficial in many respects. I loved them all before I understood what man is and can be."

In spite of this outburst — which was undeserved, as Elizabeth had not read Stein's letter — Nietzsche treasured the admiration which Stein felt for him, and he was grieved by his untimely death in 1887.

"Heinrich von Stein is dead," he wrote to Peter Gast, "quite suddenly, heart failure. I really loved him: it seemed to me that he was reserved to me for a later age. He belonged to the very few men in whose existence I had pleasure; also he had great trust in me. He said in the end that in my presence thoughts came to him for which he would otherwise not have had the courage: I 'freed' him. And how we *laughed* up here together. He was noted for not laughing. . . . The affair so grieves me that I can hardly believe it. No, how lonely I feel!"

A third disappointment had come to Nietzsche as the result of a well-meant suggestion by his sister that he should try to get back into academic circles and get permission to teach in some

## THE WITHDRAWN SOUL

University. Nietzsche considered the idea and made some inquiries about the possibility of such an arrangement at Leipzig. The reply was unfavourable. In August 1883 he wrote to Peter Gast : " Heinze, the present Rector of the University, has told me quite bluntly that my application would be turned down at Leipzig (and at all other German Universities also) : the Faculty would not dare to propose me to the ministry — on account of my attitude to Christianity and to conceptions of God ". Nietzsche claimed to be satisfied. " Bravo ! This point of view has given me courage again." And a little later he says : "*Aut Christus : aut Zarathustra !*" But there was a fourth source of disturbance of greater moment than those already mentioned : his sister married Dr. Bernard Förster, a high-school teacher in Berlin, who had resigned his post on account of the Anti-Semitic agitation which he carried on, and who was to become the founder and head of a small agricultural colony, *Nueva Germania*, in Paraguay.

After leaving Berlin Förster had come to stay with his mother at Leipzig ; and as she was a friend of Nietzsche's mother, Förster was brought into frequent contact with Elizabeth at the time when she was most alienated from her brother over Lou Salomé. She turned from Nietzsche to Förster, and soon became secretly engaged to him. At first Nietzsche knew nothing of this, and when diplomatic relations were re-established between him and Elizabeth, Förster was on the point of leaving on a preliminary visit to Paraguay to make arrangements for the Colony. Nietzsche expressed his satisfaction to Elizabeth in July 1883 at Förster's change of occupation, and congratulated him heartily on leaving Europe and the Jewish question behind him. But Nietzsche's mother scented the engagement and became alarmed lest, after his return from Paraguay, Förster should persuade Elizabeth to accompany him back there with the Colonists. She asked Nietzsche to combat his sister's infatuation. Nietzsche disliked the Anti-Semitic movement, and scorned its advocates. Hence he was wounded, almost beyond expression, that his sister, even when he had cast her off, should turn to an Anti-Semite for help. Nietzsche therefore complied with his

## NIETZSCHE

mother's request, his anger at the whole situation being accentuated by the belief that Förster had much to do with the agitation against Lou Salomé which Elizabeth had so persistently kept up. Most of the letters he then wrote have been destroyed, and only one fragment remains. In it he sums up by saying: "But finally you show too clearly by the extravagant widely visible step of your engagement to Förster that you wish to offer your life not to *my* highest aims, but to those ideals which I have overcome and have now to struggle against (Christianity, Wagner, Schopenhauerian pity, etc.). You have gone over to my antipodes. The instinct of your love ought to have preserved you from this."

But nothing Nietzsche could say was of any avail. His sister was more resolute and persistent than he; she sustained his attack and wore down his defences. Yet he only half capitulated. He tolerated Förster, occasionally saying pleasant things of him and to him. And he came to realise, through Elizabeth's insistence, that he was himself at fault, for his violent emotional criticism had served only to drive his sister nearer to Förster. "I see now quite clearly", he wrote in March 1885, "that my reproaches, which appeared unintelligible to you, have bound you even more firmly to Förster." But he continued to resent the loss of Elizabeth, and vainly suggested that there were other places to colonise than Paraguay. In April 1885 he sent a conventional polite letter to the prospective bridegroom, but he found himself unable to attend the wedding; and two days before it, on 20th May, he wrote to his sister from Venice at great length — about himself:

"For the day which decides your lot in life (and in it no one can wish you happiness and prosperity and good omens and good courage more than I do) — for this day I must draw up for myself a balance-sheet of life. From now on you will have first and foremost in your head and heart very different things than those of your brother, and so rightly and justly it ought to be — and hence it is natural that you will share more and more your husband's way of thought; which is

## THE WITHDRAWN SOUL

not at all mine, however much I have to respect and praise in it. But in order that you may have some kind of guide as to how far judgment on your brother requires much caution and forbearance, I am writing to you to-day, as a sign of great affection, to tell where the evil and burden of my position lies. From childhood till now I have found no one with needs of heart and conscience like mine. This forces me, even to-day, as at all times, to present myself, as well as may be, and often with much ill grace, in some one of the classes of man which are allowed and intelligible to-day. But that man can thrive only among those of like mind and will is an article of faith with me (right down to the nourishment and needs of the body); that I have none, is my misfortune. My University life was a wearisome search for an adjustment to a false environment; my approach to Wagner was the same, only in an opposite direction. Almost all my human relationships have arisen from attacks of the feeling of loneliness; Overbeck as well as Rée and Malwida — I have been ridiculously happy when I found or thought that I had found any little ground or corner at all in common with anyone. My memory is over-burdened with a thousand humiliating recollections, connected with such weakness, when I absolutely no longer endured the loneliness. Add my ill-health, which always brings the most awful despondency upon me; it is not without reason that I have been so very ill — and even now am still on the average ill, *i.e.* depressed — as I said, only because I lack the right environment and have always to play somewhat of a comedy instead of recuperating by means of men. — I do not on that account regard myself at all as a reserved, secretive or suspicious man; on the contrary! If I were so I should not suffer so much. But it is not possible to communicate oneself at will, however desirous one is of doing so; but one must find someone to whom communication can be made. The feeling that there is something very distant and strange about me, that my words have other colours than the same words in the mouths of other men, that with me there is a many-coloured foreground which deceives — precisely this feeling, which has been reported to me lately from several quarters, remains the highest level of ‘understanding’ which

## NIETZSCHE

I have hitherto found. All that I have written hitherto is foreground ; for me myself it is undertaken always only in the pauses of thought. The things with which I have to do are of the most dangerous sort ; that in between them at one time I recommend Schopenhauer or Wagner to the Germans in a popular manner, at another think out Zarathustras, these are recreations for me, but above all also screens, behind which I can again sit for a time.

And so, my dear Lama, do not regard me as mad, and in particular forgive me if I do not come to your ceremony: a 'morbid' philosopher like me would be a sorry person to give a bride away. With a thousand fond wishes.

Your FRITZ."

After the marriage Elizabeth and her husband remained in Germany for almost a year, and there was some danger that Förster would again become deeply involved in the Anti-Semitic movement. There was thus some relief mingled with the sorrow in Nietzsche's mind when the Colonists finally sailed for Paraguay early in 1886.

Nietzsche found still another cause for discontent at this period : even the faithful Peter Gast was falling off. In April, before Elizabeth's wedding, he went to Venice, but found or fancied that he found, Gast less assiduous in his attentions and less helpful as a courier than usual. Gast's music, however, was a compensation. From Venice Nietzsche went as usual to Sils-Maria for the summer and then back for the winter to Nice, via Naumburg, where he spent a short time with his mother. The next summer was again spent in the Engadine : but before going there, Nietzsche paid a visit to Leipzig to meet Rohde who had been appointed to a chair in the University. Nietzsche received the news of the appointment from his mother, whereupon he wrote to his old friend in February 1886, speaking of the old days gone by, of the hopes of his youth, and of their lack of realisation. "To me it is like a dream that I was once upon a time such a hopeful animal, *philologus inter philologos*. Nothing of it has been achieved : or as you may say among yourselves, 'he has achieved nothing' . . . Dear old friend Rohde, it seems to me that you

## THE WITHDRAWN SOUL

know life better because you have placed yourself in it, while I see it ever more from afar." Early in the summer Nietzsche visited Rohde — to suffer fresh disappointment. Stimulated by the thought of Rohde's return to those old scenes, Nietzsche saw himself in fancy also back in the old rôle, and entertained the idea, half seriously, of a restoration there — in spite of the plain speaking of the Rector three years before. Nietzsche's hope was naïve; he had not realised how he and his old friends had changed. He was chagrined to find that they all had occupations and interests of their own, and had nothing more for him than a passing politeness. There were no worshippers to be obtained there. Rohde too was changed, and, moreover, he was not quite happy. The atmosphere of Leipzig, physical and spiritual, did not suit him and he had not settled down. But that did not bring him any nearer to Nietzsche. He had forced himself to take as much interest as he could in all that Nietzsche wrote, but from the time of the publication of *Human all too Human*, he had been out of sympathy with the trend of Nietzsche's thought. And so the two men met, talked, looked at one another, and found they were strangers. Before the end of June they parted, never to meet again. Correspondence languished, and after a short flare-up in 1887, ceased entirely. We may follow the story to its conclusion.

In May 1887 Nietzsche asked Rohde to find a post for a young friend of his, where an eye could be kept on him. He concluded by excusing himself for not undertaking the task, as he could not get in touch with young people. "The older men are my *recreation*, such as Jacob Burckhardt or Hippolyte Taine : and even my friend Rohde is not nearly old enough for me. . . . But 'the day will sometime come' etc."

Rohde, who knew and disliked the young man in question, refused the commission, and he was annoyed by Nietzsche's reference to the superior wisdom of Taine, for whose pessimistic and cynical philosophy he himself had a strong antipathy. He expressed his disagreement strongly, characterising Taine as lacking in substance — "without content".



## NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche's reply was angry : " No, my old friend Rohde, I allow no one to speak with such lack of respect of Mr. Taine as your letter does — and you least of all, because it is contrary to all good manners to talk in that way of anyone whom you know I highly esteem ".

And so the lecture went on, for several pages, concluding : " Don't take offence. But I believe, if I knew only this one utterance of yours, I should despise you on the ground of the lack of instinct which it expresses. Fortunately in other ways you are to me a proved being."

Rohde kept his temper and apologised. Nietzsche accepted the apology, apologising in turn, but rather spoiling the effect by pointing out that his own enthusiasm for Taine was increased by the fact that Taine was the only person in the world besides Burckhardt who still had a good word for him. And towards the end of the year — November 1887 — he returned to the attack in a postscript to the last letter which passed between them. After again explaining the inviolability of Taine, he wrote : " Honestly, you have never said a word which allowed me to guess you knew what a fate lies on me. Have I ever reproached you with it ? Not even in my heart ; were it only because I am not accustomed to anything else from anyone. . . . I have now forty-three years behind me and am just as I was when a child."

The period from 1886 to the middle of 1888 is featureless in Nietzsche's external history : the summer at Sils-Maria, the winter in Italy, for the most part at Nice, with a visit to Turin in April 1888. We have, however, a clear picture of him as he was in the autumn of 1887 from the pen of his old friend Deussen, who found an opportunity during a journey through Switzerland and along the Mediterranean with his wife to visit the " hermit of Sils-Maria ".

" On a wonderfully beautiful autumn morning ", says Deussen, " I descended the Maloja Pass, coming from Chiavenna, and soon Sils-Maria lay before us, where with throbbing heart I met my friend and embraced him with deep emotion after fourteen years' separation. But what changes had come upon

## THE WITHDRAWN SOUL

him in that time. That was no longer the proud bearing, the elastic step, the flowing speech of old. Laboriously and bending a little to the side, he seemed to drag himself along, and his speech was often clumsy and faltering. Perhaps it was not one of his good days. 'Dear friend,' he said dolefully, as he pointed to a few passing clouds, 'I must have blue sky over me, if I am to collect my thoughts.' He then led us to his favourite places. I still remember particularly a grassy bed on a precipice, high above a mountain stream brawling in the depths. 'Here,' he said, 'I like best to lie and here I have my best thoughts.' After the visitors had lunched and rested for an hour at the hotel where Nietzsche also usually had his midday meals, Nietzsche came to their door, inquiring anxiously whether they were tired, asking for pardon if he had come too soon, etc. I mention this," says Deussen, "because such an exaggerated solicitude and consideration had not lain previously in Nietzsche's character and seemed to me significant of his present state. Next morning he led me into his lodgings, or rather, as he said, into his cave. It was a simple room in a peasant's house, three minutes from the main road: Nietzsche had rented it for the season for a franc a day. The furnishings were the simplest imaginable. At one side stood his books, mostly well known to me of old, then followed a rustic table with tea-cups, egg-shells, manuscripts, toilet articles in a motley confusion, which was carried further by a boot-jack, with a boot on it, to the still unmade bed. Everything pointed to careless service and to a patient master who did everything for himself. At midday we departed, and Nietzsche accompanied us to the next village, an hour down the valley. Here he expressed again the gloomy forebodings which, alas, were so soon fulfilled. As we said good-bye tears stood in his eyes, something I had never seen in him before."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Erinnerungen*, pp. 91 ff.

## XXIII

### THE MAN OF THE MASKS

AFTER the revelation of the eternal recurrence at Sils-Maria in 1881, Nietzsche intended to write two great books. One was *Zarathustra*; the other was to be a prose version of his thought, providing a coherent and definitive account of his doctrine as a whole. He began writing almost at once and as the years passed the collection of notes and aphorisms grew. In September 1884, after completing the third part of *Zarathustra*, he wrote to Peter Gast: "I have finished the main task which I had proposed to myself this summer — the next six years belong to the working out of a scheme in which I have outlined my 'philosophy'. It is going well and hopefully. Meanwhile", he adds, "*Zarathustra* has only the purely personal significance that it is a book to edify and encourage me — for the rest, dark and hidden and ridiculous for everybody." But Nietzsche broke off to write the fourth part of *Zarathustra*. In 1885 he resumed his task, but he could not wait. So he interrupted the main work again to send out a forerunner of it in June 1885: this was *Beyond Good and Evil*. In 1886 he broke off once more to re-edit his earlier works, writing fresh prefaces to them, tracing his own development, and indicating the permanent value to be attributed to these earlier productions. In September, back at the main project, he wrote to his sister: "For the next four years there is announced the working out of a four-volume main-work: the title itself is frightening: '*The Will to Power: Attempt at the Transvaluation of all Values*'. For this I have need of *everything*: health, solitude, good spirits, perhaps a wife." In the spring and summer of 1887 he interrupted his progress to write another book, setting forth his doctrine again in a limited and provisional form: this was *The Genealogy of Morals*; and in the spring of the next year he

## THE MAN OF THE MASKS

wrote two more, very rapidly, *The Case of Wagner* and *The Twilight of the Idols*. Meanwhile the main work was not shaping too well, and Nietzsche's plans for it kept altering. Each of the minor publications drew largely on his stock of accumulated material, thus altering the balance both of what he had still to say and the means wherewith to say it. He had one plan in March 1887, another in the following winter, and a third — the last — in September 1888. The final version of the scheme differed from the others in beginning with an attack on Christianity. This section of the work, written at high speed, was given the title of *The Antichrist*; but beyond a few notes for the third section, little else was done to add to the material or work out the plan.

The work as a whole, *The Will to Power: Attempt at the Transvaluation of all Values*, was not completed and most of the material was left in confusion. Nietzsche had indicated in a general way how some of the paragraphs were to be classified in accordance with his first scheme, that of March 1887, but apart from the new version of the first section, *The Antichrist*, the rest were left as an amorphous mass. To this we must add that the various provisional publications, from *Beyond Good and Evil* to *The Twilight of the Idols*, not only came from the main quarry but also overlapped one another very considerably in content, involving considerable repetition of themes and arguments. If a clear picture is to be obtained, the period must be treated as a whole, the various semi-independent parts brought together again, and emphasis laid on the underlying principle determining the treatment.

It must be observed that Nietzsche himself found difficulty in delineating and interrelating the parts of his argument, and he carried out none of his changing plans to completion. The reason for this is deep-seated. What he had to offer was not a systematic philosophy, consisting of coherent and interdependent parts, but rather a set of variations on one theme, not developing one another in any organic way, but capable of many rearrangements without noticeable loss. Furthermore, the theme in its origin is a personal

## NIETZSCHE

one, and it is from this personal basis that Nietzsche has generalised a philosophy to fit all knowledge and all existence.

The theme is a simple one : weakness and, in compensation for it, the will to power. We may begin with the personal basis, and to this end some recapitulation is necessary.

From early childhood Nietzsche was a being apart. His isolation and separation from the world at large, with its roots in his natural constitution, was fostered and developed by external circumstances ; his training and his physical imperfections conspiring with his natural tendencies to produce a single result. We have seen him aloof and unusual among the childish companions of his first school, precocious and select in *Germania* and *Schulpforta* ; and we watched the failure of his attempt to be a man among men at Bonn, and also, though not so markedly, at Leipzig. Unable to understand or to sympathise and comport with the ordinary boy or man, he could be at home only in a small circle where no alien element was allowed to intrude. He did not understand others unless they thought and felt as he did ; and unless they were like minded to him and accommodated themselves to him, he failed to anticipate how they would react to his behaviour. Careful, polite and considerate in small things, he was apt to be tactless, impolite and inconsiderate in large ; he could accommodate himself fully to others only where accommodation was not necessary. And it was partly at least through this inadaptability and lack of concrete human understanding that he quarrelled with almost all his friends, Wagner, Gersdorff, Rohde, Rée, Lou and even his sister. Peter Gast was an exception, proving the rule.

The home circle of women at Röcken and at Naumburg fostered this tendency, and Nietzsche's recollection of his father, much as he treasured it for many years, did nothing to counteract it ; for his father too was a man apart, unfitted for a rough world. The delicate touch of snobbery which the home inculcated, flitting from the solid majesty of Friedrich Wilhelm IV to the shadowy Polish Count, was an influence in the same direction. And we have seen that when Nietzsche — prematurely, it may

## THE MAN OF THE MASKS

well be — took his seat on the professorial chair at Basle, he had an outlook on life in accordance with his nature and experience. Even the small world in which he had been trained was partly alien to him : we have seen how scornfully at Leipzig he could write of his fellow philologists and how readily he could suspect them of underhand conspiracy against him and his friend Rohde. So too he went to Basle prepared to make the worst of it, regarding his appointment to a select post in a select society as an adventurous leap into “the wide wide world, into a new, unaccustomed profession, into a difficult and oppressive atmosphere of duty and work”. And after his arrival there he refused many of the invitations which colleagues and potential friends showered upon him.

The alienation from the larger world which such an attitude involves may lead in compensation to an unusually tense and emotional attachment to a small group, where the jarring elements do not appear ; and the success of this compensation depends on several factors. For one thing, it depends on the strength of the individual's self-assertive tendencies. If he is of a submissive nature he may find a small group, perhaps those round a single person, to which he may adhere and by which his homage may be repaid by confidence and sympathy. Such assertion as his soul requires may then be found in the refreshment and satisfaction he finds there. As a true follower he is strong in the strength of his leader. If he is inherently less submissive, successful adjustment is less probable ; for he demands something which he can dominate and which nevertheless will be great enough and strong enough to reward him for the loss of the rest of the world. Such a group is difficult to procure and unstable in its continuance. Nietzsche encountered this difficulty in an acute form. Self-assertion was a dominant need for him, and for him it had to be an assertion over men of the highest quality. But such men do not remain submissive or at command, and their union is subject to easy dissolution. As we have seen, they fell away from Nietzsche.

Fate too was against him. Even unusual, sensitive and

## NIETZSCHE

artistic men may in the course of time be led, partly at least, out of their isolation, and given a corner, even if an uneasy one, in the larger world. Rohde, and in a lesser degree Gersdorff, were men with a temperamental strain not unlike that of Nietzsche, and they went through their youthful and adolescent experience much as he did. And when Nietzsche's early philosophy broke into its most clamant form in *The Birth of Tragedy*, they hailed and defended it. But they were drawn out of their isolation. The temperamental Rohde, a professor *malgré lui*, became more and more immersed in his routine and scholarly duties, and when he married a wife with whom he was deeply in love, he found a place and function which occupied him and filled his mind. Gersdorff, through the death of his brothers, became heir to an estate. He too married and found that the world had a place and task for him. But, as we have seen, Nietzsche was deprived of these influences. His health drove him from his Chair in Basle and rendered him homeless and functionless. The influences which stabilised his friends and carried them over the difficult period of dawning manhood were lacking to him; and he was never purged of the troubles of adolescence. On the contrary, we have seen how his isolation and failure of adjustment increased as the years went on.

Another untoward circumstance was Nietzsche's choice of a profession — if choice it may be called when all his circumstances conspired to guide him into it. In grammar he was not interested, and the narrower scientific side of philology never caught his imagination. In the literary and philosophical side of the life of a classical scholar there is, of course, much scope, and a vital world broad enough and deep enough to satisfy the mind to which it fully appeals. But in Nietzsche's case it lacked solidity and accuracy. It afforded, as we have seen, abundant material for thought and imagination; but the interpretations to which Nietzsche was led were conjectures, unverified guesses, not knowledge about things. Nietzsche was conscious of this weakness and at times he longed for a training in some physical science, such as chemistry, where speculations can be put to the

## THE MAN OF THE MASKS

test of measurement. Lacking this, there was, even in his own mind, a taint of subjectivity about all he knew, a lack of contact with a real, solid, refractory world. He was conscious, deeply conscious, of his power over words, and he realised to the full the conventional and capricious elements in language. As we have seen, he accused language of falsifying reality and creating an unreal world of appearances : and it was mainly of words that he was master. At times he rejoiced in this mastery with a joy and triumph which reached its climax in *Zarathustra*. In February 1884 he expressed himself candidly to Rohde : " I fancy that with this *Zarathustra* I have brought the German language to its perfection. After Luther and Goethe, a third step had to be taken ; look at it, old comrade of my heart, and see whether force, flexibility and melody have ever been so united in any language before. Read Goethe after a page of my book — and you will see that that ' undulating ' quality which belongs to Goethe as a draughtsman is not foreign to the speech-modeller either. I am ahead of him in my severer, manlier line, yet without becoming a lout like Luther. My style is a *dance* ; a play of symmetries of every kind, and a mocking and leaping over these symmetries. This extends even to the choice of vowels.

Moreover, I have remained a *poet* to the full extent of that conception even if I have sometimes tyrannically imposed opposition to all poetising on myself."

That is one side ; but there was another. We have already seen how, after the revelation of the eternal recurrence, doubts began to assail him and he became so sharply conscious of his scientific difficulties that he proposed to suspend all literary activity and to spend some years at a University, Vienna or Paris, preferably with Lou Salomé, to acquire the elementary basis of knowledge about the physical world. And it was with indignation that he rejected the notion that he was to be treated as a poet and not as an exact and philosophical thinker. Here is how he put the matter to his sister : " Of the difficulty of the task which lies before me, no one has an idea ; and when anyone



## NIETZSCHE

thinks of it as a form of literary work, e.g. the preparation of my *Zarathustra*, it gives me almost a fit of nausea and of laughter or retching — so repulsive all making of literature is to me ; and the thought of being classed in the end among *writers* ! is one of the things that make me tremble ". Of course there is fear behind this revulsion, the fear that the notion might be true.

The weakness which Nietzsche felt here showed itself in his writing, and as in some degree at least the style is the man, a word may be allowed on this point. Nietzsche's style had much of the quality he claimed for it ; and above all, it escaped the heaviness of the long and involved, cumulative, German sentence. Nietzsche did not usually hold his breath long enough for such a form of speech, and he had the merit of seldom trying to say more than one thing at once. At times he has a grace and a delicacy and a poetic fancy which charms and enlivens the reader. But there is weakness too. His imagery, often impressive and striking, is also sometimes confused and conflicting, and his skill or care in avoiding a mixed metaphor is not always in the highest evidence. Moreover, his aphoristic style, leaving arguments incomplete and often unjustified, calls at times, in compensation, for over-emphasis and for literary shouting to draw the attention of the reader and unsettle his judgment. Nietzsche is apt to follow an insinuation with a sudden grimace and then run away. The style of *Zarathustra* at its best is very fine and in places full of beauty ; but when it challenges Luther by imitating the translation of the Bible, as it often does, it does not always succeed. It is apt to lack the weight, the massiveness and force which carries Luther, sometimes with coarseness but often with dignity, through to his goal without artifice or unnecessary gesture. Nietzsche dances and plays tricks, but he is often beaten by Luther's steady pace. Luther has a security and self-confidence which Nietzsche lacks.

The same feature shows itself on a larger scale in Nietzsche's argument. He is enthusiastic, dogmatic, extreme, on one side or another : all is black or white for him and there is no grey. His intemperate attack on Strauss, and his eulogy of the remnants

## THE MAN OF THE MASKS

of savagery in Greece against its later reason and culture, are two striking forms of this at the beginning of his career, and in the period to follow we shall find others. Nietzsche often shouts because he is not sure that he will otherwise be listened to, afraid that if he does not proclaim a startling message the dull reader may put the book down from boredom. His very brilliance thus confesses weakness.

The artistic tendency, of which the style of *Zarathustra* is only one example, is of course responsible for much of the interest which Nietzsche's work affords, but to him personally it was also the source of some of his conflict and misery. We have already seen in an earlier chapter how spontaneous the artistic impulse was in him, how it led him into poetry, into literature and into music, even as a child, in a degree surpassing that of the average cultured person. And when religious doubt arose, he was ready to lift art into the highest place and treat aesthetic satisfaction as the sole justification of the universe. But although he was an artist, Nietzsche was not in the first rank. He wrote verse easily, the jingle of rhyme came to him without much trouble ; but, interesting as some of his poetry is, the highest inspiration is lacking to it. He was apt in mimicry, and his parodies of Goethe — in jealous criticism, be it said — are as smooth and competent as any of his other work. This perhaps sufficiently tells its own story.

In music Nietzsche's ability stood high, but not high enough for his own ends. He improvised easily, and apparently well ; but when he attempted serious written composition he did not reach the highest standard ; and he was artist enough to know it. Moreover, he was utterly overshadowed by Wagner and forced into a subordinate position, which, after the first glow of worship had passed, humiliated him and for some time drove him from music altogether. He ceased to compose, and even to play. The sense of mingled power and inferiority which his experience gave him, led to the varying undecided attitudes to art with which we are already familiar.

Throughout his experience, art in all its main forms brought

mortification along with satisfaction ; it drove him in on himself and helped to separate him from the common world.

Some men in Nietzsche's circumstances have found consolation in religion, in submission to one who is so transcendent that the submission does not arouse any thought of rivalry or any jealous sense of inferiority, but gives rather a feeling of security, power and triumph. Nietzsche too sought for this consolation but could not permanently find it. The intellectual loss of his faith in Christianity, which probably began in Schulpforta and was completed at Bonn, did not lead to any recorded emotional crisis at the time, but the outburst in *Zarathustra* against those who "robbed" him of it has already shown us how deep the injury went. The intellectual change did not remove the tendencies which Christian belief and practice normally satisfy. Christianity demands at the outset the surrender by the individual of his whole self to the infinite God : but for Nietzsche there was now no Christian God. For some time, under the influence of Schopenhauer, he tried to accept the solution that satisfaction lies only in complete renunciation, in detachment from all the interests of the empirical world, and in submission to an infinite reality, which to the human eye is indistinguishable from nothing at all. But he could not rest here. Submission must give life, not death ; and so Nietzsche offered himself to a god of his own devising, Dionysus, who, although less desirable than the Christian God, being unmoral and of doubtful intelligence, was nevertheless partly akin to man, at least to the higher man, in that he had artistic tendencies of a sort and governed the world in accordance with them. But Dionysus also failed Nietzsche ; the throne of Heaven seemed empty or occupied only by blind chance. Nietzsche therefore offered himself in full surrender as a willing sacrifice to blind chance, in the hope that it might prove some kind of god and raise him to infinite power and glory. Thus even in "*Zarathustra the Godless*" the religious impulse remained, unsatisfied, unappeased, unabated.

It may be useful here, and it will facilitate later discussion, if we bring the situation which we are considering into relation

## THE MAN OF THE MASKS

to one of the outstanding doctrines of the philosophy of Kant. In the section of the *Critique of Pure Reason* known as the "Deduction of the Categories", Kant tries to show the relativity and interdependence of the subject and the object of experience. The relationship which he sets forth is a reciprocal one. On the one hand, the unity of the object of experience implies the unity of a single subject to which all the parts or aspects of the object may be present; and on the other, the unity of the subject itself is possible only through the unity of its activity in grasping all the parts of the object together and combining them in experience into one whole. In Kant's treatment the conception remains somewhat formal and its psychological mechanism is antiquated, so that we need not follow his precise formulation here, and may take it rather in the wider application to which it leads. A world of experience, that is to say, the world as it exists for any individual, however low and imperfect the unity running through that world may be, implies a single subject by which it is apprehended; and on the other hand, the unity of the subject, his consciousness of his self-identity, is not possible unless his world is held together. But both of these correlative unities, the unity of the object and the unity of the subject of experience, are capable of varying degrees of realisation. Some unity there must be — that is the condition of the existence of any experience at all — but there is a vast step between the barest unity by which a subject and object can be constituted and the richness and integration of which a full co-ordinated life and experience is capable. The lower the degree of unity on either side, the lower is the unity on the other. When the self is imperfectly integrated, governed by different and even antagonistic moods and attitudes and interests, each expressing itself at a different time, the world of experience for such a self also tends to fall asunder into different spheres, relatively isolated from one another and governed by different principles. This, as we have seen, was partly the case of Schopenhauer.

On the other hand, when the external world of experience is disunited, not by one or two great cleavages, but by innumerable

fissures and by the lack of any strong uniting principle in any part, then the unity of the self also becomes feeble and empty. A rich unity is concrete and expresses itself in its activity, uniting its impulses and tendencies into a single organic whole: an empty unity becomes abstract and formal, standing apart from its expressions, failing to let itself go into them or find itself in them. It is something other than them, behind them, not genuinely embodied in them. They are not so much forms and vehicles of it as masks and screens behind which it hides. This was in part the case of Nietzsche.

Nietzsche himself realised this although, of course, he put a different interpretation on the situation, attributing it to depth rather than to shallowness. There are many statements in his writings on the point; here is one from section 40 of *Beyond Good and Evil*: "Everything that is deep, loves the mask; the deepest things of all have even a hatred of image and likeness. Is not the *opposite* the right cloak in which the nakedness of a God should go about?" There are many things one wants to hide, not because they are wrong in any moral sense, or even because they are disapproved of by others, but merely because they are too intimate and personal for public gaze. To let others know of them is to stand naked before an unsympathetic world and to feel an agony of shame before it. "There are processes of so tender a nature, that one does well to cover them with coarseness and make them unrecognisable; there are actions of love and of an excessive magnanimity, after which nothing is more advisable than to take a stick and thrash the eye-witness thoroughly, thereby dulling his memory." The later part of the paragraph is a transparent piece of self-analysis: the confession of a withdrawn soul, unable to express itself adequately in the world, or to act in personal matters calmly and adequately, a soul which, after shrinking from contact with others, unexpectedly explodes gauchely into speech, often producing the opposite effect to that really desired. It is like the awkwardness of the young child made self-conscious and bashful by strange company, or of the adolescent youth who is inhibited yet anxious to shine; for

## THE MAN OF THE MASKS

shyness may lead to a compensatory exhibition, which by its very inappropriate daring produces fresh embarrassment and even a further arrogant display. Here is what Nietzsche says : "I could imagine that a man who had something costly and delicate to hide, may roll through life coarsely and roundly like an old green heavily bound wine cask : the refinement of his shame will have it thus. A man who has depths in his shame meets even his destinies and tender decisions on paths to which few ever attain ; and the presence of which their nearest and most intimate are not allowed to know ; his mortal danger is hidden from their eyes and so too is the restoration of his security. Such a secret one, who instinctively uses speech to be silent and to conceal and is inexhaustible in devices for avoiding communication, *wills* and demands that a mask of him should move about in place of him in the hearts and minds of his friends ; and even if he does not desire it his eyes will be opened one day to see that nevertheless a mask of him is there — and that it is well that it is so." The qualification involved here should be noted. Real intimacy and contact is desired at first and only on its failure does the mask appear. Nietzsche continues : "Every deep spirit requires a mask ; and moreover, around every deep spirit a mask continually grows, thanks to the constant falsity, that is superficiality, of the construction he puts upon every word, every step, and every token of life". The theme recurs again and again, and one more reference may be permitted. Near the end of the book, when he professes to be indicating the features of nobility, Nietzsche speaks of the recluse — himself. "In the writings of a recluse one always hears also some echo of the desert, some of the whispered tones and shy wariness of solitude ; out of his strongest words, out of his cry itself there resounds yet a new and more dangerous kind of silence, of concealment. . . . The recluse does not believe that a philosopher — assuming that a philosopher has always been first of all a recluse — has ever expressed his own and final opinions in books : does one not write books just to conceal what is hidden in oneself. — Yes, he will doubt whether a philosopher can have 'final'

opinions of his 'own' at all, whether with him behind every cave there does lie, and must lie, another deeper cave — a more spacious, stranger, richer world over a superficial one, an abyss beyond every ground, and under every 'grounding'. Such philosophy is a foreground philosophy — that is the judgment of a recluse. There is something capricious in his stopping *here*, in his looking back and looking round, in his ceasing to dig *here* and putting the spade away — there is something suspicious in it. Every philosophy also conceals a philosophy ; every opinion is also a covert, every word is a mask."<sup>1</sup>

When the unity of the self becomes masked and remote like this and does not express itself in its activities, a sense of unreality tends at times to come over it, which in spite of the very strongest insistence on its reality and irrefragability, may lead to doubts about its very existence. We may content ourselves for the moment with one example of this, which we have already considered. It comes from the fifth chapter of the first part of *Zarathustra*. Nietzsche tells us thus that the passions, once considered evil, become good when the imprint of the individual's personality, his aim, which is his virtue, is placed upon them. This suggests an approach to a concrete theory of individuality, but the suggestion is cancelled by what follows ; for Nietzsche shows his disbelief in the reality of the alleged process by insisting that happiness requires us to limit ourselves to one virtue and consequently to one passion. It is more illustrious to have many virtues, he says, but not conducive to peace : they quarrel, and the self becomes merely their battle-field. In these circumstances the imprinting of the unity of the self on the various impulses means little more than giving them full freedom whenever they move us or appeal to us. The best man, therefore, if he is many-sided, is hardly more of a *unity* than the worst ; perhaps not more than the criminal described in the following chapter as "a mass of diseases", a "coil of wild serpents, that are seldom at peace themselves" ; or than the neophyte of the eighth chapter, who, aspiring to freedom but not yet attaining to it, is told that

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 289.

## THE MAN OF THE MASKS

his impulses have been restrained and crave liberation. "Thy wild dogs want to get into freedom ; they bark for joy in their cellar when thy spirit endeavours to open all prison doors." Apparently, thus, the unity of the released pack of quarrelling wild dogs — a unity which coincides with that of the self — resides merely in the singleness of the prison in which they were once confined ; and it is perhaps not without significance that this unity is not only that of a prison but of also a cellar, something underground and out of sight.

All this, of course, is in some degree theory on Nietzsche's part, but it is not so primarily or mainly. It springs out of experience and is almost a direct transcription of it. The full theory is to follow.



## XXIV

### THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

FROM Kant, through Schopenhauer and Lange, Nietzsche learned of the activity of the mind in construing and constructing the world of objects as apprehended in experience. He probably did not study Kant himself, and consequently did not grasp fully the reasons which led Kant to his conclusions nor the exact meaning to be given to them. But he learned in a second-hand way that space, time, causality are ultimately subjective forms, forms in which *we* must apprehend things, and not forms or principles of things-in-themselves. He was also taught that the object of knowledge owes its unity to the subject who perceives it, it is something constructed and put together by the mind.

Kant's position, however, was unstable, and the subsequent thinkers who learned from him departed from it in various ways. Fichte moved in one direction, Hegel in another, Schopenhauer in a third. Each of these philosophers tried in his own way to bring reality back more fully into experience and to get rid of the otiose thing-in-itself which, by standing over against experience, seemed to condemn it as a whole.

Nietzsche moved in a fourth direction. Gradually, although hesitatingly, he too rejected the conception of the thing-in-itself, at least in his earlier views, but, he failed to restore to experience the reality of which the thing-in-itself had robbed it.

We have now to consider what his view was and how he reached it.

We may begin by distinguishing Nietzsche's view from that of Kant. Kant, as we have seen, drew a distinction between things in the world of experience and the thing-in-itself. The former are mind-dependent, mind-constructed or construed ;

## THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

nevertheless they are "empirically real", a term which may perhaps be rendered by saying that for most practical purposes they can be treated as real. Although the world of experience is not ultimate and can never be closed into a single complete system by human reason, nevertheless within the limits to which our understanding can reach it is coherent and intelligible. An example may make the point clearer. Kant found difficulties in the conception of causality. Does the chain of causes run back infinitely from one cause to another, or in tracing it do we find the series coming somewhere to an end in a final cause? Kant held both alternatives to be unsatisfactory, and on the rejection of them his view of the ideality of experience partly depends. If we are dealing with finally real things, independent of our minds, then one or other of the alternatives must be true. But neither is true, therefore we are not dealing with things in themselves; we are dealing with a chain of causes in our experience carried back in that experience at any given moment only to a given point, but capable of indefinite prolongation. In the same way Kant tells us that space is neither wholly finite nor infinite in extent, but is capable of indefinite extension.

On the other hand, within this chain of causes, or within the limits of the space which we apprehend, there is no indefiniteness. The causal sequence, so far as we can trace it, is rigid and invariable, and, wherever our apprehension of space reaches, the laws of geometry hold. If we remain within the limits of possible experience, we find thus a coherent, orderly world, common to all rational beings.

In grasping that world we may, of course, make errors. We may mistake an actual cause, or give a portion of space a wrong shape: we are subject to illusions and to deceit. But the background of these illusions or errors is a true apprehension: they are mistakes which we have to correct, they are misapprehensions of the nature of the empirically real world, and not true features of it. Indeed, the starting-point of Kant's whole analysis is the contention that we can make true judgments about objects of experience, judgments which are universal and

necessary, conditions of the existence of the object, and binding on all rational beings.

At this point Nietzsche diverged from Kant. He attributed to the empirically real world, as essential to its nature, all the illusions and errors that may arise in the course of apprehending it. That is to say, he united and even identified the subjectivity which arises within knowledge, in the sense of the errors we may make and the deceits we may suffer in grasping the common world, with the subjectivity which for Kant attached to the world of experience as a whole, in the sense that it is mind — dependent and not a thing-in-itself. The result, as we shall see, is chaos. Why did Nietzsche adopt this view?

The ultimate reasons were personal: five may be singled out.

1. The first of these was made clear as early as 1873 in the article entitled "Truth and Lie in an Extra-moral Sense". Thinking is dependent on language, and without words no developed intellectual processes are possible. Moreover, words as symbols have an arbitrary origin in the sense that they do not derive directly from the nature of things, but from the agreement, tacit or explicit, of those who use them and agree to understand them in the same way. Nietzsche, as a philologist, was fully aware of these facts, but unfortunately, for reasons which we have already partly considered, he was not so fully aware of the other side of the picture: viz. that when men have decided with more or less adequacy which sounds are to be used, and what their application is to be, objective conditions come in to determine the rest. Thus, to take a trivial example, if a gentleman wishes his glass to be replenished, he may say that it is "empty", or "*leeg*", or "*leer*", or "*vide*". But the condition he indicates will be the same in each case and the appropriate steps to meet it will depend on the objective facts and not on the symbols for those facts. We cannot turn an empty glass into a full one merely by trying to give the word "empty" another meaning.

These seem obvious considerations, but Nietzsche overlooks

## THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

them, and nowhere does he inquire what the objective conditions are which determine the successful use of words and the attachment of meanings to them. Ignoring the objective aspect of the situation altogether, or assuming in effect that our power of manipulating words gives us unlimited power over the things of experience to which these words refer, he presents a very limited subjective element as the cardinal one. Borrowing from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche describes the intellect as an instrument which the individual uses for his self-preservation, an instrument, he adds, typical of the weaker and less robust individuals in a society. Presumably the stronger person takes what he wants without argument, whereas his weaker brother has to persuade others by means of words. But the real instrument of the weak, Nietzsche says, is dissimulation, make-believe, and the field within which those who employ this weapon operate is one of "illusion, flattery, lying and deceit, talking behind people's backs, representation, life in borrowed glory, masquerade, veiling-convention, stage-playing".<sup>1</sup>

These features are the rule here, and the promoters and expert users of words, the weak, adapt them to deceive. From this, in Nietzsche's eyes, follows the nature of language, it corresponds to nothing in reality — apparently he thinks it has no objective conditions other than social or anti-social ones — it is a device whereby we deceive others, and also, when we think, by means of which we deceive ourselves. Thus the illusions and deceptions which may trouble us within a limited part of experience are spread by Nietzsche over the whole field.

2. But, it may be asked, how do we succeed in thus deceiving ourselves? What form does the deception take? In the end he believes that the whole process is deceptive and illusory, the whole object is a mind-made artefact, and there are at least two closely related personal elements determining this severe judgment. We may take them in turn.

All general conceptions, Nietzsche maintains, carrying an old tradition to an extreme limit, are arbitrary constructs, reached

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol vi, p. 75

by ignoring all the real differences between things ; they involve the "equating of the unequal". Here is how he presents the matter in *Human all too Human* : "The invention of the laws of numbers was made on the ground of the original error, still prevailing, that there are several like things (but in fact there are no like things), or at least that there are things (but there is no 'thing'). The supposition of plurality presupposes that there is *something*, which appears many times : but precisely here error has already taken charge, we are already inventing beings, units, which do not exist."<sup>1</sup> The whole of mathematics is false, Nietzsche thinks, because it rests throughout on the conception of equality — without its equations it is nothing — and there is no real equality, no two things are equal. But if things are not equal, why do we even say they are ?

"You will forgive me as an old philologist," says Nietzsche in section 22 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, "who cannot refrain from the wickedness of laying his finger on bad practices of interpretation : but that 'conformity to law' of which you physicists talk so proudly, as if — it exists only in virtue of your interpretation and bad philology,— it is not a matter of fact, not 'text', but rather only a naïve human arrangement and twisting of meaning by means of which you fall sufficiently into line with the democratic instincts of the modern soul. 'Equality before the law everywhere.—In this respect Nature is not otherwise and not better than we' : a pleasing secret motive, in which once again there is hidden the hostility of the mob towards all that is privileged and autocratic, thus a second and more refined atheism. '*Ni dieu : ni maître*', that's what you wish : and so : 'Hurrah for natural law !' — isn't it so ?"

Nietzsche, of course, has turned the matter round. It is he who has implicitly linked up the denial of equality or likeness in nature with his own unlikeness to other men. Things measured, things counted, are not like one another, because there is no one like him.

3. The position thus adopted leads to the denial of law in

<sup>1</sup> *Human all too Human*, § 19.

## THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

nature, for if no two things are alike, regularity and order in Nietzsche's eyes become meaningless. But there is a further consideration. Nietzsche again takes the situation as a personal matter, and thinks of law only, or at least primarily, in terms of a law-giver. He thus reverses an old theistic argument. There is law, it was argued, therefore there must be a law-giver. There is no law-giver, replies Nietzsche, therefore there is no law. The point is stated explicitly in the second volume of *Human all too Human*, where we are told that natural law is a superstitious term. "When you speak with such rapture of conformity to law in nature, you must presuppose either that all natural things follow their law out of a free obedience which they impose on themselves — in which case you will thereby admit the morality of nature; — or you will be enraptured by the idea of a creating mechanician, who has made the most ingenious watch, with human beings on it as decorations. By the term 'conformity to law' the necessity in nature is made more human and becomes a final corner of refuge for mythological dreaming."<sup>1</sup> Thus even in his most positivistic period, Nietzsche was no thorough-going rationalist. He accepted the major premise of Paley's argument for the existence of God.

4. Personal considerations entered into Nietzsche's thought in yet another way. The contrast of "being" and "becoming", of the static and the flowing, played a large part in his theory of knowledge and reality, and as he was unable to bring them into satisfactory relation to one another, in the strife between them he threw himself whole-heartedly on the side of "becoming", of change, of movement. As a child, and indeed as a young man, Nietzsche felt the desire, even the need, for a strong, unchanging and unshakable being, as a protection against the chances and mischances of life, "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning". But, as we have seen, his belief faded and he found no real rest there. On the other hand, driven in on himself, in an intense, restless and yet ineffective self-consciousness, he felt the need for outward expression, for

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* § 9.

the content and movement of life, which circumstances had denied him. Longing for fullness of life, for the outgoing activity of the self into the gaily-coloured busy world, he rejected the unchanging and permanent as stagnant and unreal. Thus, when he confronted the stolid rotund featureless One of Parmenides with the ceaseless fiery flux of Heraclitus, he had no doubt about the superiority of that which changed, and moved and flowed. So too, when he learned that unity was introduced into experience by mind, he tended to treat the objects thus constructed as unreal, and to regard the incessant manifold flux of sensation to which, on Kantian theory, the forms of sense and understanding were applied, as the superior and at times almost as the real. In the same way, as we shall see, he was led to treat the activities of the self as superior to its unity and even as more real than it.

This attitude helped him also to accept a peculiar view of the material universe. A distinguished eighteenth-century Italian mathematician and physicist, Boscovich, resolved the atom theoretically into a centre of force, into a monad, the being of which was nothing other than its activity. Nietzsche accepted his theory eagerly, not on purely physical grounds — for he did not know them — but because it resolved the static and unchanging into force or energy.

The general effect of Nietzsche's philosophic outlook and his dissatisfaction with his shut-in self-consciousness and his restless yearning for concreteness and activity, was to emphasise for him the gap between the vivid-coloured moving world of sense, and the pallid forms in which the mind sought to enclose that world. He came to believe that there can be no reconciliation between the two ; as he put it himself in *The Will to Power* : " Knowledge and becoming exclude one another ".<sup>1</sup>

5. A final personal consideration may be mentioned. Nietzsche's views were unpopular, hostile to the ideas of other people, and in some measure directed against these others. They were, of course, adventurous, and Nietzsche made the most of

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 517.

## THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

the exhilaration they gave him, an exhilaration of mingled curiosity and daring, as if he were sailing for the first time into unknown seas. Here is the way to happiness, say the orthodox philosophers, pointing to orthodox virtue. What have we to do with your happiness, replies Nietzsche, or with your virtue? "Why does one of us then go aside, become a philosopher, become a rhinoceros, become a cave-bear, become a ghost? Is it not to get away from virtue and happiness? — We are by nature much too happy, much too virtuous, not to find a little temptation to become philosophers, that is to say, immoralists and adventurers. . . . We have our own curiosity about the labyrinth, we are anxious to make the acquaintance of that gentleman, the Minotaur, of whom dangerous tales are told."<sup>1</sup> There is a little bravado here, but there is truth in it, and there is something more behind, perhaps less respectable. Some exponents of his way of thought, he says, have been unpopular. "That these immoralists have posed as 'martyrs of truth' is to be forgiven them: the truth is that not the urge to truth, but unloosening, wicked scepticism, the pleasure in adventure is the impulse leading them to negate — In other cases personal rancour drives them into the realm of problems,— they struggle with problems in order to carry their point with persons. Above all it is revenge which has become scientifically useful — the revenge of the oppressed, such as have been thrust aside and even oppressed by the prevailing truth."<sup>2</sup> The statement purports to be about others, but the words are not altogether untrue of Nietzsche himself.

These presuppositions led Nietzsche, though not without many windings and inconsistencies, towards definite views of the nature of the world, knowledge and the self; and in the development of these views two stages may be marked, a negative and a positive one. We may begin with the negative phase, and consider briefly each of the main topics in turn.

In the first place, Nietzsche adopted an interesting variation of the Kantian view of the world. As we have seen, he abandoned

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xviii, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 457.



the conception of the thing-in-itself, by contrast with which the world of experience is condemned as mere appearance, but instead of thereby bringing appearance and reality together again, he tended to discredit the world of appearance altogether. Of course he did not do so at one step, or remain consistently at the lofty height on which this austerity is possible, but the general drift of his argument is unmistakable.

After the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* he soon came to the conclusion that there is no metaphysical world, no world beyond that of possible experience. At the time of *Human all too Human* he had realised that the world of experience is shot through with our hopes and fears, and is in contrast with that of physical science. He tells us that we human beings have made moral, aesthetic and religious claims on the world, looking into it "with blind inclination, passion or fear, and have revelled in the bad habits of illogical thought"; with the result that "this world has gradually become so wonderfully gaily-hued, terrible, full of meaning and soul, it has acquired colour — but we have been the colourists".<sup>1</sup> And from this illusory appearance science can give us but incomplete and temporary deliverance. The illusion which has grown up is necessary to life.

But illusion does not arise only from passion, desire and ignorance: knowledge, reason and science also modify what is given to them, and this for Nietzsche means that they falsify it. Space and time are subjective, that is to say, ultimately unreal. Things themselves — the objects of experience of which Kant speaks — are constructs made by the apprehending, classifying, arranging mind. They too are artificial products, made by us for our convenience: they are not realities. The position to which Nietzsche's thought tends is thus simple. There is no real world beyond experience, no thing-in-itself. But experience is not true to its origin, and the mind constructs a "world" for itself by distorting and reshaping, unifying, ordering, simplifying what is given. Indeed it must do so, for thought is essentially static and universal, whereas the data of experience are manifold,

<sup>1</sup> *Human all too Human*, § 16.

## THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

particular, and in constant flux. "Knowledge and becoming exclude one another", we have been told. Thus the world of experience is not real either; from which it would seem to follow that there is no real world at all.

Nietzsche, however, is loath to put the matter quite so bluntly. In a passage written in 1884 during the pause between the third and fourth parts of *Zarathustra*, he tries to save something from the wreck. After mentioning the subjective origin of the forms of perception,—space, time, force, causality,—and the subjective activity of imagination and the understanding, he says: "All these subjective conceptions do not throw doubt on the *objective truth* of logical, mathematical, chemical laws. Our ability to express ourselves about these laws is another matter: we have to make use of language." But he could not maintain this position, and by 1887 he had slipped a little further towards unreality. "That things have a quality in themselves, quite apart from interpretation and subjectivity is a perfectly otiose hypothesis";<sup>1</sup> and in 1888 in criticism of the conception of a "true and apparent world", he wrote: "The former of these is a pure fiction, constructed out of purely imagined things".<sup>2</sup>

Each of us constructs an apparent world, a world of experience, a world of objects, of our own, and to these essentially private worlds Nietzsche gives the name of perspectives. In his early essay of 1873 on *Truth and Lie* he had attributed the falsifying activity of the intellect to practical ends it subserved—control of the environment and the maintenance of the individual thinker's existence. The same idea recurs in *The Will to Power* in 1888. The apparent world which every individual constructs for himself is based on his sense of values and not on any abstract criterion of truth or reality; it is a perspective which he gains, it is the expression of his reaction to the whole or to other subjects, or perhaps it is even that reaction itself. When the perspective is taken away, there is no world left over; and beyond the interacting subjects and the perspectives to which they give rise, there is nothing whatever.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 560.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 568.

<sup>3</sup> *V. ibid.* §§ 567 and 636.

It does not seem possible to dissolve reality more thoroughly than Nietzsche has done here.

Secondly, we have to consider his treatment of knowledge. It is obvious from what has been said, that if knowledge, or what passes as knowledge, does not lead to reality, there must be something wrong, or at least unexpected, about the processes of knowledge themselves. We might even be inclined to say that they do not give us knowledge.

Nietzsche himself might not have regarded this as a criticism. He admits the unifying function of knowledge, and however imperfect his own acquaintance with Kant may have been, he knew enough not to deny that the understanding seeks to render the world it knows coherent and internally systematic. But the admission is not made without a grudge. As we have seen, Nietzsche contends throughout that the processes of knowledge falsify the material on which they operate, but he now goes further and challenges the principles of thought themselves. He does not, indeed, make a detailed critical analysis of them, as did some of his contemporaries, *e.g.* Lotze; but in *The Will to Power* he attacks them in what he takes to be their fundamental form — the so-called Law of Contradiction. To it he gives short shrift. "We fail to assert and deny one and the same thing: that is a subjective principle of experience, in it no 'necessity' is expressed, but only an incapacity."<sup>1</sup> A little later — showing in himself little of the incapacity referred to — he adds: "The principle thus contains no criterion of truth, but an imperative, about what is to be accepted as true". Then, rather surprisingly, he hurries another ally to the attack on the fortress: "In reality we believe in the principle under the influence of infinite empiricism". These three assailants, of course, are normally not on good terms with one another, but for the moment they have been conscripted for special service and made to forget their quarrels.

After this we are not surprised to find how human truth is, as set forth in the following note from *The Will to Power*:

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 516.

## THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

“ True : from the side of feeling : — what excites feeling most strongly (‘ ego ’) ;  
from the side of thinking : — what gives thinking the greatest feeling of power ;  
from the side of tasting, seeing, hearing : — that by which the greatest resistance is to be afforded.”<sup>1</sup>

But this analysis, which locates the feeling of the truth — and Nietzsche adds of reality — in that form of experience where we feel most fully both our own power and the resistance of the object on which we expend it, does not prevent him in another paragraph from giving the situation a very different colouring : “ The belief in truth, the need to have a foothold on something believed to be true : psychological reduction to one side of all previous feelings of value. Fear, Laziness.”<sup>2</sup>

In these passages we may see plainly the play and interplay of the personal motives which we have already considered, and there for the moment we may leave the matter.

Thirdly, we come to the self. The self does not come unscathed through this upheaval. It is true that there are passages where its importance and reality seem enhanced, and it becomes the omnipotent creator of the world, poor and discordant as that world has hitherto been. And these passages are in line with some of the personal motives which sway Nietzsche’s thought. Here is how he puts the matter in *The Will to Power*. Things, thinghood itself, he maintains, are created by us, and beyond the creating activity which “ posits things ” there is no further reality. He questions whether what appears to be the action of the external world is not really due to our interaction with other subjects, who also express their wills in worlds of their own making. “ The other beings act on us ; the world of appearances which we have prepared is a preparation against and a conquest over those actions ; a kind of defence mechanism. The subject alone is demonstrable.”<sup>3</sup> Then he advances the hypothesis that

*Ibid.* § 533.

*Ibid.* § 585.

*Ibid.* § 569.

“there are only subjects,—that ‘object’ is only a kind of effect of subject on subject — a *modus* of the subject”.

But although this special kind of subjective idealism, where selves are not only alien to one another but are intrinsically opposed, appeals to one side of Nietzsche’s nature, there are too many other factors operating to allow it to stand. The dissipation of the world and of truth weakens the self and leads it also to destruction. In history of thought after Berkeley comes Hume, and the self does not linger when the material world has vanished.

Nietzsche realised that his criticism of the phenomena of nature applies also to the phenomena of inner experience and mind. If permanence is unreal in the outward world, and if unity is an artefact there, so too must it be in the inner world. Accordingly, he attacks Descartes’ famous declaration, *Cogito ergo sum*, I think, therefore I am. In this proposition Descartes believed he had found a final standing ground which doubt could not undermine or remove; but says Nietzsche, he did not push his doubt far enough. There is no justification, except a grammatical one, he declares, for the assumption that thinking requires a subject — a substance — which thinks. Through Descartes’ route there is no proof of an ego, or of anything beyond the momentary thought itself. Introspection, Nietzsche argues further, fails to show that thinking is the act of anything: it is just there, pure process. To call it an act is to attribute it to a subject whose activity it is, and for this there is no justification, logical or empirical. “Both the act and the agent are imaginary”, he declares.<sup>1</sup> No causal connections are to be discovered in consciousness. “Everything which is conscious is a final appearance, a conclusion — and causes nothing; all sequence in consciousness is completely atomic.”<sup>2</sup>

In developing this view Nietzsche regards the mind as a product, almost a by-product, of the body. His own intense and almost unremitting self-consciousness, in its emptiness and yearning futility, was so often to him personally a source of

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 477.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 478.

## THE SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHER

pain, that he revenges himself by suppressing and degrading it, before the harmonious, united, vigorous action of a healthy animal body. The real unity is not in the mind but in the body : it is not conscious but unconscious.

From this point of view the will too loses its unity and even its reality. Will is just the name for complex appearances which have their roots in the unconscious. "There is no will", he declares roundly. "There lies such an unspeakably greater amount in what is called 'body' and 'flesh' : the rest is a small accessory."<sup>1</sup>

In a passage written in the summer of 1885, Nietzsche attempted to analyse the "will" into elements, finding in it a complex of feelings, including underlying bodily sensations chiefly from the muscles, together with thoughts and emotional components arising from effort, conquest and so forth. "This tangled nest of feelings, states and false suggestions, which is designated by the people with one word and regarded as one thing because it comes into existence suddenly and all at once and belongs to the most frequent and consequently 'best known' forms of experience",<sup>2</sup> is here analysed, Nietzsche maintains, for the first time, and he repeats the analysis in *Beyond Good and Evil* with an interesting addition. Will is a command, and we give the command to ourselves, rejoicing in a feeling of power when it is carried out. But the conscious command is really powerless ; for the governing influences lie behind and not in consciousness, so that our own feelings of satisfaction and triumph are unjustified. The will thus is an appearance, a figment of the imagination.

The position which we have reached is summed up comprehensively by Nietzsche himself in *The Will to Power* in a passage written in the first half of 1888 : "There is neither 'mind', nor reason, nor thinking, nor consciousness, nor soul, nor will, nor truth".<sup>3</sup> These, he declares, are all useless fictions. Nor are we concerned with a subject and object : all that is in question, all that is real in any sense of that term, is a particular

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 674.

<sup>2</sup> Works, vol. xvi, p. 118

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* § 480

## NIETZSCHE

kind of animal, man who cannot live and maintain himself unless he is provided with a moderate degree of regularity and order in his experience, and above all in his perceptions of what purports to be the external world. Beyond this animal, together with the steps he takes to provide himself with the regularity he needs, there is nothing.

## XXV

### THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

In the previous chapter we saw how the world, knowledge and the self lose their traditional values in Nietzsche's hands and are gradually reduced to naught. As the poetry of Zarathustra dies away, we hear the vehement voice of the preacher, proclaiming the vanity of all things, the aimlessness, falsity and unreality of all that we know or think we know. To the realisation of this futility, this degradation and ultimate destruction of the highest values, Nietzsche gives the name Nihilism.

Of course the term does not mean for him the throwing of revolutionary bombs at Russian Grand Dukes ; it stands primarily for an outlook on life, the sense that all is vanity, although in one passage at least there are traces of a more active conception. Writing late in 1887 or early in 1888, he said : " Nihilism is not only a contemplation of the ' in vain ', not only the belief that everything is worthy of going to destruction, one applies one's hand and sends it there. . . . This, if you like, is illogical ; but the Nihilist does not believe in the necessity of being logical. . . . It is a state of strong minds and wills : and for such it is not possible to remain at the No of a ' judgment ' : — the *No of the act* comes out of their nature. The annihilation through the judgment is seconded by annihilation through the hand."<sup>1</sup> But the passage is isolated, and the only " No of an act " which Nietzsche attempted was the annihilating of his own and other people's ideas.

At first Nietzsche did not realise the significance of his position. " It is only late ", he wrote in the summer of 1887, " that one has courage for what one really *knows*. That hitherto I have

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 24.



been out and out a Nihilist, I have admitted to myself only a short time ago : the energy with which I went forwards as a Nihilist, deceived me concerning this basic fact. When one sets one's self against a purpose, it seems impossible that ' purposelessness in itself ' is our fundamental article of faith."<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche gave several accounts of the way in which this stage of negation, the everlasting Nay, is reached. The simplest and perhaps most fundamental one was probably written in 1885 : " Everything in the world displeased me : but what displeased me most was my displeasure with everything " .<sup>2</sup> Later on, however, he felt the need of amplifying this. Writing in the winter of 1887-8 in *The Will to Power*, he attributed the attitude to three factors, all, of course, drawn from his own mental history and development. We begin, his argument implies, with the belief that the course of our lives and the course of history in general have a meaning. The belief may take several forms. We may recognise an ethical purpose in things, manifesting itself in the world order, so that history is in the long run the perfect court of justice. Or again, we may discover an increase in love and harmony in human intercourse, or an increase in the sum of human happiness. But these assumptions, Nietzsche said, all prove to be false : there is no goal to which life or history is moving, there is no progress, no realisation of an ideal ; all is unending, purposeless change, mere " becoming " .

Secondly, when this lack of faith in human progress overtakes us, we may fall back on the view that there is a unity perpetually manifesting itself in all life. Life may not be moving towards some far-off divine event, but the divine is in it here and now and at every stage. All life is one, and the unity in it is its final reality.

Nietzsche soon lost belief in this conception also. Strauss, it may be recalled, held to both positions, trying to combine the belief in progress with the realisation of the value of every stage in the progress and the unity of the whole. And as we have seen, his temerity in being an optimist after he had lost

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 12.

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

faith in the Christian God, infuriated Nietzsche. Schopenhauer gave up the first belief, and it was largely through his influence that Nietzsche acquired the courage to surrender it also. Schopenhauer, however, retained the second belief in a curiously negative form, and although Nietzsche did not accept it in Schopenhauer's sense, his doctrine of Dionysus and his metaphysical theory of the early period attempted to preserve it in a strengthened and improved version. But Nietzsche soon abandoned this theory, and by the time of *Human all too Human*, after the breach with Wagner, the surrender was complete.

There is, however, according to Nietzsche, a third possible factor in the situation. Realising the aimlessness and incoherence of the world of becoming, we may postulate a world beyond the present in which our thought and desire may take refuge, a world of unity and being and perfection. But, says Nietzsche, there is no such world. The only world is the world of appearance with its aimlessness, its chaotic change, its falsity and unreality. We have placed the highest value in the conceptions of end or purpose, unity and truth, and we have inserted these values into the world : now we have to take them out again, and the world looks worthless to us. That is Nihilism.

In a slightly earlier passage, written in the late summer of 1887, Nietzsche puts the situation briefly and simply. A belief, he says there, is the holding of something to be true. "The most extreme form of Nihilism would be the insight : that every belief, every holding-for-true, is necessarily false : because there is no true world at all."<sup>1</sup> But he still finds one more horror to add : "let us think this thought in its most frightful form : existence, just as it is, without meaning or goal, but inevitably recurring, without any finale into nothingness : 'the eternal recurrence'. That is the most extreme form of Nihilism : Nothing (the 'meaningless') for ever !"<sup>2</sup>

Superficially at least, Nietzsche is not consistent in his treatment of the origin of Nihilism, and he speaks of it as if it could be a sign both of strength and of weakness. In the former case

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 55.

## NIETZSCHE

it is due to an increase in the power of the mind such that the creeds and convictions and purposes which have hitherto governed it are felt to be inadequate ; in the latter it is due to decadence. These two forms, however, are not so independent and opposed as this simple statement would suggest : decadence, weakness, failure, exhaustion, is the primary origin, and the Nihilism which is alleged to be a sign of rising strength is in reality derivative and secondary. How it enters into Nietzsche's scheme of things we may consider later, confining ourselves at present to the primary case, where Nihilism arises from decadence, over-ripeness, the weakening of life, the fall of the leaf.

Nihilism is not the cause of decadence, but the outcome or expression of it — in one place Nietzsche calls it the "logic" of it.<sup>1</sup> And decadence is a natural and unescapable phenomenon, part of the curve of life as it rises and falls again. "Falling off, decay, refuse, is nothing to be condemned in itself", he wrote in the first part of 1888 : "it is a necessary consequence of life, of the increase of life. The appearance of *décadence*" — Nietzsche prefers the French word — "is as necessary as the beginning and progress of life : it does not lie in our choice to set it aside. On the contrary, reason wishes that it may get its rights."<sup>2</sup>

Decadence thus, for Nietzsche, is primarily a biological factor, or as he chooses to put it, a physiological one, arising from old age or some other form of physiological deterioration. Psychological and moral forms of therapeutic treatment cannot remove the cause of it, they cannot arrest its course, for "they are physiologically null". The scepticism and corruption of morals which mark the condition are effects of it, not causes, and even sickness, itself a physical state, is secondary. "Diseases, above all diseases of the nerves and the head, are signs that the *defensive* strength of strong beings is lacking." Decadence itself on Nietzsche's view is not to be resisted ; "it is absolutely necessary and peculiar to every age and every people. What is to be fought with all one's strength is the introduction of the contagion into the sound part of the organism."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 41.

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

But decadence has also its mental and social aspects, and it is not easy to reconcile Nietzsche's treatment of them with the supposed primacy of the physiological side. Modern Europe for Nietzsche was decadent; but, with partial exceptions, such as phases of the Italian Renaissance, and some exceptional individuals like Cesare Borgia and Napoleon, Europe had been decadent ever since the fall of Rome. Christianity, which for the purpose of his argument here, Nietzsche treats as a form of Judaism, destroyed healthy pagan Rome — and Judaism was decadent. When the classical world raised its head for a moment during the Renaissance, Judah, in the form of the Reformation, suppressed it again. The *ancien régime* in France was aristocratic and noble; when the Revolution overcame it, Judah once again triumphed over the classical ideal. From this it would seem to follow that not only the great mass of the Catholic world, but also the Protestants of Germany and England, and the French revolutionaries, — all masked Jews, — were physically degenerate, suffering from some unknown and unobservable form of organic decay.

On the social side Nietzsche has another theory of the origin of Nihilism. As we have already seen, and as we shall see more fully later, in his view society should be graded into classes; the ordinary people in the world — the superfluous ones as Zarathustra called them — were born to be underlings and servants or at most bridges to the Superman, to a higher species. This higher species requires utterly different conditions for its realisation from those which satisfy the rabble beneath it — "leisure, adventure, disbelief, licentiousness itself"; whereas down below among the various strata which make up the people, "industry, rule, moderation, the fixed 'conviction' of one's place, in short the herd-virtues", are the advantageous qualities. But it is the higher species, with its inexhaustible fertility and power, which maintains the belief in mankind, and this higher species may fail. This comes about, apparently, when the lower classes, particularly the baser mechanic sort of men and the traders, lose "their modesty and inflate their needs into cosmic

and *metaphysical* values. In this way all existence is vulgarised ; in so far as the *mob* rules, it tyrannises over the exceptions, so that the latter lose belief in themselves and become Nihilists.”<sup>1</sup>

This conception that the exceptional person, the potential Superman, or semi-Superman, is corrupted when he is required by the commonalty to behave himself like the others, to obey laws, to conduct himself soberly, work with some regularity, and find some useful function in the community, is obviously different from the former one which laid all the responsibility for decadence upon physical causes ; and although Nietzsche adheres to both, using whichever is most suitable, he makes no attempt to reconcile them. In himself, of course, the two aspects came together : his ill-health and physical weakness of sight and digestion, with its possible constitutional basis in the Nietzsche family inheritance, co-operated with his social mal-adjustments and with the loss of a secure position among his fellows — even among a select group of his fellows — to produce the bias towards scepticism and pessimism which made him, in his own theoretic sense, a Nihilist. But there is no evidence for any such conjunction as this in the field of history. And it was without justification that Nietzsche projected his own image on to society and saw himself in larger letters there.

We may now ask what happens, according to Nietzsche, when an individual or a society becomes decadent. There are two replies : one for the many, another for the few — the very few. In the first case a reaction appears to be set up against Nihilism, but it merely accentuates the disease ; those who are infected spread the contagion by their own activity and complete their downfall. The few who escape, rise above Nihilism, and use it to their own salvation. Only a brief reference is required here to the former case, that of the many, for we shall have to consider it more fully in connection with Nietzsche’s criticism of morals, religion and art. Here are the main points as he set them forth in the early part of 1888.<sup>2</sup>

(1) The beliefs which we accept under the influence of

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 44.

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

exhaustion, as remedies against it, serve merely to accentuate it. Nietzsche instances Christianity and the belief in progress under this heading.

(2) We lose the power of resisting stimuli, becoming irritable and easily upset. Our will becomes disintegrated, so that we are unable to preserve a straight course. We are over-excited and vibrate inharmoniously like an ill-tuned string. Altruism, with its cry of pity, is given as an example of this.

(3) We confuse cause and effect, regarding decadence as the result and not as the source of our ill-health. All religious morality comes under this ban.

(4) Finally, we long for a state in which we shall suffer no more, and regard life itself as the cause of evil. This shows itself in a preference for unconscious states, such as sleep or swooning, where feeling is at rest, and the ascription to them of a higher value than that given to conscious activity.

We shall have to examine some of these conceptions more fully in the sequel, but before we deal with them we may now consider the more positive side of Nietzsche's doctrine, in so far as it applies to the theory of knowledge and reality in general.

In spite of his doctrine of the incurable nature of decadence and the inevitability of Nihilism for a decadent, Nietzsche endeavours to escape from it. So far as he can he regards himself as beyond decadence, not merely as the awkward, uncared-for, solicitous, failing, weather-ridden recluse whom Deussen saw at Sils-Maria in 1887, but rather as rejuvenated youth, as Zarathustra coming forth from his cave in grace and strength to greet the great Noontide. And so, in the face of the destruction of reality and truth, Nietzsche seeks to find a salvation and restoration for knowledge, springing up in spite of the destruction, and perhaps, even by reason of it.

The theme is the Will to Power. In his early essay of 1873 on *Truth and Lie*, Nietzsche attributes much of the falsity of knowledge, that is to say, its failure to deal with things as they really are, to the fact that our fundamental motive is not a desire for truth, but rather a desire for tools to carry out our practical

## NIETZSCHE

purposes, such as self-preservation, by persuading and cheating our fellow men ; and in his subsequent writings the accusation is repeated from time to time in varying forms. Behind it, of course, there lies the assumption that there *is* " truth ", whether we can reach it or not : that it means something to say that a statement is true. But gradually this assumption lost its hold on Nietzsche : truth, as it became unattainable, became otiose, and false ideas, ideas corresponding to no objective reality, became for him not only useful but even essential for life. We accept ideas for their utility, not for their truth. If they are useful, what does their truth matter ? Besides, is there any truth at all to trouble about ?

As Nietzsche's thought moved along these lines truth began to change its position, for it had either to vanish from experience and thought altogether, or find a new location for itself. Nietzsche began with the assumption that truth consists in the correspondence of thought to an external independent world, and when that world disappeared it threatened to drag truth into oblivion with it. But Nietzsche could not afford to let truth go. Nihilism, he recognised, involved the doctrine that all judgments are false, except the judgment which condemns them : but the exception cannot maintain itself against the rule.

Nietzsche therefore took the bold step of identifying truth with what he had previously alleged to be the cause of its error. To be true does not mean to correspond to some reality external to experience, it means to forward and maintain life ; and as Nietzsche's conception of the nature of life itself changed from that of mere self-maintenance to that of the will to power, so too his conception of truth developed until it became identified with the intellectual means to this end.

The position itself is a difficult one to maintain and Nietzsche does not develop it coherently or at any length. Indeed he often, perhaps generally, finds himself haunted by the ghost of the meaning which he is trying to exorcise. Nevertheless the trend of his thought is unmistakable. A few references may illustrate the position.

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

At one stage — section 39 of *Beyond Good and Evil* — he is clearly dominated by the view which he is trying to surmount ; for, in attacking “ amiable Idealists ” he maintains that “ something might be true : although it were in the highest degree harmful and dangerous ”. But in a previous paragraph — section 34 — he repudiates this assumption in effect : “ It is nothing more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than appearance ” — a statement followed by the implicit denial that there is any radical distinction between true and false at all. In *The Will to Power* we are told, in a passage written in August or September 1887, that “ Morally expressed the world is false. But in so far as morals itself is a part of this world, morals is false.”<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the criticism of the world contradicts itself and falls away. “ Truth ”, Nietzsche adds, “ is thus not something which is there in existence and which has to be found out,— but something *to be created*, and which provides the name for a *process*, still more for a will to overcome, which in itself has no end.” It is an endless process, “ an actively determining — not a becoming conscious of something, which might be fixed and determinate in itself. It is a word for the ‘ will to power ’.”

Nietzsche thus is led to an instrumental view of knowledge. Our senses and our understanding have been developed as means whereby we maintain ourselves in our environment ; and the sole value attaching to them and to the ideas they supply resides in the success which they achieve. If the term truth is to be used for the higher value which one idea has when contrasted with another, then it must have this practical significance, it must mean greater utility as a means to power. To use a more modern terminology, ideas are true because and in so far as they “ work ” ; and they “ work ” when they afford us power, or perhaps more strictly, an increase of power.

The theory which Nietzsche has thus outlined is derived in some measure from Schopenhauer, for whom also the “ world as idea ” is an illusion created by the restless self-asserting will. But there is a difference between the two theories. We have

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 552.



## NIETZSCHE

seen that if we ask Schopenhauer why the will, which on his hypothesis is inwardly calm and at rest, should break forth into a miserable world, or even delude itself that it does so, he cannot give us a reply, and merely sets us aside with the indication that we are asking a meaningless question. Nietzsche can take a different view. From early days, at least from the time of *The Birth of Tragedy*, he disagreed with Schopenhauer: the will is not intrinsically in a state of calm and rest but of extreme tension and activity. In the later period which we are now considering, Nietzsche returns in some measure to his earlier doctrine, and reinstates the will as ultimate reality. We may consider how he does this.

An obvious difficulty which has to be overcome is that the will has been overwhelmed in the general sceptical ruin of knowledge and reality, and Nietzsche has to restore it in order to find a basis for his reconstruction. The first step therefore is to declare that the will which was destroyed, and which he declared not to exist, was not the real will, but a misconception regarding it. "My proposition is", says Nietzsche, "that the will of previous psychology is an unjustified generalisation, that this will does not exist at all, that instead of grasping the articulation of one *determinate* will into many forms, we have erased the character of the will by abstracting from it its content, its 'whither?'—that is pre-eminently the case with Schopenhauer: what he calls the 'will' is a mere empty word."<sup>1</sup> For will, and still more for the will to life, Nietzsche maintains, we must substitute the will to power. The mere will, as an eviscerated abstraction, does not exist. When its true content is restored to it, it becomes the will to power and a reality.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* he has already taken a step in this direction. His sceptical analysis had dissolved the self into a disconnected multitude of conflicting passions and desires, but he now allows these impulses to come together and form a real organic system, and suggests that they are differentiations of a primary form of life which in the end is to be identified with the

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 692.

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

will. "Suppose", he says, "that we succeeded in explaining our total life as the articulation and differentiation of a basic form of the will — viz. of the will to power, as my theory states — granted that we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and find in it the solution of the problem of generation and nutrition — it is a single problem — then we should have acquired the right to define all effective power unambiguously as *will to power*. The world seen from within, the world defined and designated according to its 'intelligible character' — it would be just 'will to power' and nothing besides."<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche has returned in effect to a point of view similar to that of Schopenhauer, the will to power being substituted for the will in general. The position is not worked out with the elaboration of Schopenhauer's treatment, and only a few indications are sketched in; these, however, give some idea of the general picture.

In this connection the view taken of the relation of pleasure and pain to the will to power is important. The motives behind Nietzsche's treatment, however, are complex, and only the main point is relevant at the moment; the view as a whole will be considered later. Pleasure, Nietzsche holds, is not an object of desire, nor is pain — more properly, displeasure — an object of aversion: they are merely consequences or accompaniments of the activity of the will, pleasure arising from an extension of the will, an increase in its mastery, displeasure from an inhibition and restraint of it.

"What man wills," Nietzsche declares in *The Will to Power*, "what every smallest part of a living organism wills, is a plus of power. Both pleasure and displeasure are consequences of striving for it."<sup>2</sup> In the search for power man needs an obstacle to overcome, for unless something opposes him, he cannot overcome it and demonstrate his mastery. "Displeasure, as the restraint of his will to power," Nietzsche goes on, "is thus a normal ingredient of every organic occurrence; a human being does not evade it, on the contrary, it is continually necessary to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 702.

## NIETZSCHE

him : every victory, every feeling of pleasure, every happening presupposes the overcoming of a resistance."

The most primitive activities of life are now interpreted from this standpoint. Nietzsche presses the amoeba into the service of his idea. "Let us take the simplest case, that of primitive nutrition : the protoplasm stretches its pseudopod out in search of something which resists it,—not from hunger but from will to power. Then it tries to overcome it, to appropriate it, and incorporate it : — What we call 'nutrition' is merely a consequent appearance, a practical application of that fundamental will to become *stronger*."<sup>1</sup>

The will to power, however, as the ultimate reality of all life, and human life in particular, disguises itself, and appears in many forms which are not commonly recognised as identical with it. Praise and gratitude, for example, are to be treated in this way. The argument is simple. In praising we judge, and assert our power to apportion honour : — gratitude is a "good revenge". But these are only a beginning : every form of endeavour, every activity, every desire, masks the will to power. In one paragraph Nietzsche mentions a number of such forms, and behind them his own experience, his own inner tensions, are not difficult to discover.<sup>2</sup> Instances he gives are the longing for freedom and independence, but also the longing for equipoise, peace and co-ordination. At a lower level even the impulse to self-preservation is a will to power. In relation to those who are greater and stronger than we are, the will takes devious routes ; the weak one subjects himself, makes himself indispensable, and glides in love into the heart of the more powerful one — to rule him. The sense of duty, of belonging intrinsically to a higher rank than do those who rule over us, the belief in a caste system, the arrogation of the right to judge and condemn — even to condemn ourselves — and the invention of new tables of value, all belong to the same category. They are ultimately disguised modes of control and domination.

The will to power is the source of value as well as of existence :

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 702.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 774 ; cf. §§ 775, 776, 720 and 721.

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

all ends, purposes and ideals are forms, extensions or tools of it. "Valuing itself", Nietzsche says, "is only this will to power."<sup>1</sup>

But in restoring reality to the will Nietzsche degrades consciousness. The ultimate springs of action and existence are unconscious and lie deep seated in animal life, not on the surface in conscious thought and intention. Consciousness is only a small and superficial part of the whole, and both the reality of the will and the greater values which it creates come from the unconscious or animal side of man's existence. The animal functions are "a million times more important", he asserts, "than all the finest states and heights of consciousness: the latter are a surplusage, in so far as they are not tools needed for those animal functions".<sup>2</sup> "The whole of conscious life, the mind together with the soul, together with the heart, with virtue and goodness," he declares, "labour in the service of the basic animal functions: above all the *increase* of life."<sup>3</sup>

Nietzsche's view of inorganic nature — or at least of what seems to be inorganic nature — is rather obscure. Nature is falsified for us by our understanding — Nietzsche cannot get away altogether from the old point of view — and we read into it "laws" and "things" which are not there. "I guard myself", he says, "against speaking of chemical laws: that has a moral flavour. What is involved is rather an absolute establishment of relations of power: the stronger becomes master over the weaker insofar as the latter cannot enforce its own degree of independence,—here there is no mercy, no forbearance, still less a respect for 'laws'." If we eliminate such false notions, Nietzsche holds, no "things" are left, only "dynamic quanta in a relation of tension to all other dynamic quanta: the essence of which consists in their relation to all other quanta". Elsewhere Nietzsche seems to regard these centres as conscious, or at least quasi-conscious beings, attributing to each a peculiar view of the universe, *i.e.* of the other centres, which is ultimately its attempt to master them. Such a view and rendering of the world Nietzsche calls a perspective, and every centre of force

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 675.

<sup>2</sup> § *Ibid.* 630.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 635; cf. § 636.

has its own perspective, its own definite valuation, its own mode of action and reaction to the rest. "There is no other kind of action," he says, "and the 'world' is only a word for the total play of these actions."<sup>1</sup>

Thus ultimately the will to power constitutes all life, all reality, all value. The intellect is its tool, a means by which it masters its enemies — all others — and by which it increases its range and mastery incessantly and without limit — save that of the resistance of those with superior strength.

From this point of view Nihilism itself acquires a new position in Nietzsche's thought, and, at least for the few, is no longer merely the product of decadence and exhaustion. When Nihilism takes hold of the mind, all values are destroyed, save the judging value itself. There remains only one value, viz. that of the supposedly true proposition, that everything is false and bad.

"Here", says Nietzsche, "arises the problem of strength and weakness :

- (1) the weak are broken in pieces by it,
- (2) the stronger are destroyed but do not break,
- (3) the strongest overcome the judging value."<sup>2</sup>

But, it may be asked, how do they overcome the judging and condemning value? At first they have to learn to stand alone in a meaningless world, and their strength may be measured, we are told, by the extent to which they can do so. Then, gradually they come to question whether the lack of purpose and meaninglessness of the world is not itself the condition of value. Here is how Nietzsche expresses this conception. In rising above Nihilism the mind asks : "Whether the lie is not something divine? Whether all the value of things does not consist in their being false? . . . Whether one should not believe in God, not because he is true, *but because he is false*? Whether despair is not merely the effect of a belief in the divinity of truth? Whether precisely the lie, and false-making (falsifying), the

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 567.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 37.

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

inserting of meaning, is not a value, a meaning, an end ?”<sup>1</sup> The point might perhaps be put more simply, but its general significance is clear : if the so-called objective world has no values of its own, we are free to place our values into it, dominate it, and make it the instrument of our glory — almost of our divinity. In principle Nietzsche has returned to the infant Zeus of Heraclitus, to Dionysus and to the heights of the God of Chance in *Zarathustra* ; to a sublime being, making and unmaking, who, in the immensity of his power is aware that it is he who has made and unmade, that he stands over his world, above it, untouched by it. Thus it is that for Nietzsche Nihilism becomes “ the ideal of the *highest* powerfulness of the mind, of superabundant life, partly destructive, partly ironic ”.<sup>2</sup>

A full-dress discussion of Nietzsche’s theory of reality and knowledge is not called for here, but a brief comment may not be out of place. Nietzsche does not carry out his view consistently ; indeed it is doubtful whether it can be made consistent. At first sight it looks as if he had restored reality and truth, although in a new sense, but if the restoration is taken seriously it has the unfortunate consequence of cancelling the argument by which it was reached. Thus, for example, if the organisation of experience and the introduction of unity, equality and law into it are means to power, and in the long run, as Nietzsche holds, knowledge can afford power only through them, then it follows that the organised world is the true world, and its condemnation as unreal appearance is a mistake. Nietzsche’s assumption, which he is unwilling to abandon, is that knowledge goes away from reality, whereas his conclusion requires that it should be a progress towards it. It would follow further, that if becoming, as Nietzsche persistently assumes, is not itself a category of knowledge, and is inherently opposed to knowledge, it cannot be true nor what is characterised by it, real. If Nietzsche’s conclusions are accepted there cannot be a realm of becoming over against the supposed world of unity of being, whereby the latter is condemned. Logically, Nietzsche ought to abandon

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 1068.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 14.

## NIETZSCHE

the irrational world and accept the rational one ; but for this re-transvaluation of values he was not prepared.

Further, as his view stands, its claim to truth is very limited : it is personal and subjective. On his own premises, the world, as he construes it, is only his means to *his* truth, *i.e.* a set of ideas which enables him to overcome his fellows in the remorseless struggle for power which he wages against them and against nature. Psychologically this may very well be so, but logically it is not satisfying. It may seem at times that Nietzsche does accept this limitation, for more than once he suggests the subjectivity and individuality of truth. “ ‘ That — is now *my* way,’ ” said Zarathustra ; “ ‘ where is yours ? ’ So I answered those who asked me ‘ the way ’. For *the* way — it does not exist.” And Zarathustra warned his disciples against a naïve acceptance of his doctrine. “ Verily, I counsel you : go forth from me and guard yourselves against Zarathustra, and better still : be ashamed of him. Perhaps he deceives you. . . . You had not sought on your own account : hence ye found me. So do all believers : therefore there is so little in all belief. Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves, and only when you have all denied me, will I return to you.”<sup>1</sup> Much of this, however, is just wholesome advice to potential disciples that they should think for themselves ; and in a minor degree it is an apology for not having disciples, an apology which implicitly likens Zarathustra’s plight to that of Christ when Peter denied him in the hall of the High Priest, and suggests a triumphant return of the disciples to him. This perhaps is its real point. And for the rest, Nietzsche’s general attitude is as uncompromising in its claim to absolute validity as that of any other philosopher.

But these difficulties and logical incoherencies are not heeded by Nietzsche himself, for the fundamental drive of his thought is not logical but moral. His real difficulty is not that reality has no meaning but that it has the wrong meaning ; and the ascription of complete irrationality to it is a defence mechanism, a measure of despair. Nietzsche did not find the world plastic,

<sup>1</sup> Also *Sprach Zarathustra*, Part I, xxii (3).

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

indeterminate and ready to be moulded to any shape the creative mind might choose to give it. On the contrary he found it hard, obdurate, satisfied with itself, with ways of its own, and not prepared to listen to him, his needs and suggestions. And his philosophy is not so much a transcription of what he found in the world, as a claim set over against it, the claim of a neglected subjectivity against a heedless, inconsiderate, alien objective reality. Moreover, the refractory world with which Nietzsche had to deal was primarily social and the necessity of it to him is emphasised, in his very withdrawal from it, by his intense feeling of loneliness. His theory is ultimately a demand that he shall have power over a world which he cannot master. Of course, it takes the form of philosophical and psychological assertion and interpretation, and since his fundamental feeling of weakness and failure led in him to the constant insistent demand for power, he saw the same elements everywhere, not only in man but also in all nature. Much of the description is true, for the demand for power is a deep-seated element in all life. But it is not the only element ; and to treat it as the source of reality itself is to confuse a claim, made in the absence of the conditions for its realisation, with that realisation itself. The result, it may be suggested, is ruinous ; for it is obvious that the divinity of the Dionysian is a disguised form of utter slavery. The Dionysian has to applaud whatever the irrational producer cares to offer him ; he has to pretend that by identifying himself with the great God, Blind Chance, he has acquired infinite power. But he does not really control the course of things, and, unless he develops a lust for destruction, ready to accept with sadistic joy any fare whatever, he feels in his heart he is not the leader, or creator, but merely a camp-follower trailing behind in the dust, in the second-hand glory of intoxication.

We shall have to deal with the Dionysian ecstasy more fully later in connection with Nietzsche's treatment of art, but it may be pointed out here he himself was a very imperfect follower of that great god. Pity Nietzsche disclaimed in his writings, because he felt it ; hardness he counselled, because he was sensitive ; and



## NIETZSCHE

of personal cruelty he was innocent, he had no delight in inflicting visible suffering. Even in his literary swashbuckling, when he attacked other than the dead, he did not intend for long to inflict pain on them, and was naïvely surprised if they felt hurt. He was of course Dionysian in that he had rare moments of rapture, and these moments are of great importance for the understanding of him ; but they themselves will be misunderstood if they are not seen against a background of a very different colour, the drab background of a suffering, lonely, unsuccessful man, conscious that even his truest and noblest conceptions are failures in the world of his fellows. Nietzsche realised with painful acuteness that he had to deal with an unescapable world of other people, over against which his own ideal world stood as a mere claim.

It may be of some advantage at this stage to realise how far the general character of such a view as that which we have just analysed was characterised in anticipation by Hegel ; for Hegel is the supreme example of the opposing tendency which brings thought and concrete reality into intimate unity. A view like that of Nietzsche Hegel regards as the logical outcome of the claims made by the abstract moral consciousness, that is to say, by the attitude of mind which asserts the intrinsically justified claims of the free spirit to freedom and power, but asserts them abstractly in the absence of the conditions under which alone they can be made good, claiming its right to judge and decide without acknowledging its duty to judge rightly, and demanding, apart from the community and even against it, satisfactions which can be obtained only within it by active participation in its affairs. When this attitude of mind reaches its peak, says Hegel, the mind thinks of itself as that which decides finally in matters of truth, right and duty. It is aware of the objective ethical demands made upon it, but it cannot forget itself and sink itself in the objective situation in full seriousness and be governed by objective needs. It is for ever conscious of itself as choosing to act in such-and-such a way, and it believes that it is completely free to act otherwise if it thinks fit. It does act as others do, but with a difference. To the naïve moral agent it says : You

## THE NIHILIST AND THE WILL TO POWER

accept a law in a straightforward fashion and act according to it ; so do I, but I go further than you, I also transcend the law, recognising it as something I have chosen when I could have chosen otherwise. " It is not the situation which is excellent, but I who am so ; and over the law and the situation I am a master who *only plays* with them at his good pleasure ; and in this ironic consciousness in which I let the highest perish, I enjoy only myself."<sup>1</sup>

Hegel, perhaps not without some agreement from Nietzsche himself, characterises this attitude as the embodiment of the principle of evil ; but into the problem of good and evil we have still to go.

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie des Rechts*, § 140 (f.).

## XXVI

### GOODNESS

THE book which Nietzsche intended to be the greatest of all his works, *The Will to Power*, has as its sub-title a phrase usually rendered as "the transvaluation of all values". The word *Umwertung*, represented in English by "transvaluation", is a coinage, meaning literally a valuation which turns upside-down, and it gains weight by its close verbal similarity to a common word, *Umwurfung*, meaning an overthrowing. Nietzsche thus claims to overthrow all values, not by destroying them outright, but by inverting them, acclaiming where ordinary judgments condemn, and condemning where they acclaim. All his writings of this period have to be interpreted from this point of view, including that entitled *Beyond Good and Evil*. Nietzsche's view throughout is a moral one in the broad sense that, in spite of some disclaimers, he remains within the field of valuation, and passes final judgments of value, although they are opposed in tenor to the judgments of ordinary people.

Ordinary people, Nietzsche found, treat their moral judgments as the most important ones they make. And since he thought these judgments bad, and resented the point of view from which they were derived, he spent much of his eloquence in contradicting and attempting to reverse them. Ordinary people have an ideal of life which seemed to Nietzsche to deny the highest values. He therefore attacked it with all the means in his power and attempted to set up a counter one, in which the true values, as he saw them, would be given their rightful place.

We may begin by considering the conception of the good life which Nietzsche commends in place of that given by the ordinary moral consciousness. It is obvious from our previous discussion that in an attempt to define the good life Nietzsche

## GOODNESS

must be confined by his general philosophic principles. He must found his doctrine somehow on the will to power, for that, as we have seen, is ultimately the source both of reality and of value. This he does. But it is by no means all he does ; for the ideal which he can devise directly from the conception of the will to power, although thrilling and enticing in its way, is not enough to satisfy his mind. His conception therefore is a complex one, containing a number of imperfectly united elements drawn from different sources, and reflecting the qualities he admired in such different beings as the tyrannical conqueror, the aristocrat and the solitary recluse of genius. The logical basis is the will to power, but the main conception in actuality is that of the aristocrat. We must, however, consider all three phases in turn.

It is obvious, of course, on Nietzsche's principles, that the good man must be strong. In November 1883, stung by his sister's reproaches and by the pettiness of her ideals, Nietzsche wrote : " There are strong ' selves ' whose self-seeking one might call almost divine (*e.g.* Zarathustra's) — but *every* strength whatever has in itself something refreshing and enrapturing to the eye. Read Shakespeare : he is full of such strong people, raw, hard, powerful, granite-people. In these our time is so poor. . . . You cannot think how lonely and ' concealed ' I always appear to myself in all the amiable ' Tartuffery ' of those people whom you call good, and what a cry there goes up at the same time within me for someone who is outspoken and can speak, even if he himself is an abomination. . . . Of course I should prefer *demi-gods* for my entertainment."

This was written at the time of the crisis in his relations with Rée and Miss Salomé, when he was being drawn into spasmodic furious action against his friends and his home by the insinuations and suggestions which played on his mind. It was an outburst of a pliable man bent almost beyond endurance, and presents the fundamental desire for power, power at any cost ; perhaps even the cruder the better, because more convincing. This power Nietzsche did not have,— not long after this he ran away from the very name of Rée,— and he would have been puzzled

## NIETZSCHE

to know what to do with it, if it had been bestowed upon him. But he wanted it, and it seemed to him then the primary thing he wanted.

The situation, however, is not so simple as this statement might appear to imply. Nietzsche's conception of the ideal man is not intelligible except in relation to a particular type and organisation of society, viz. that which he calls the aristocratic. "Every elevation of the type 'man'", he says in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society — and so will it always be again : a society which believes in a long ladder of orders of rank and differences of valuation from man to man, and which requires slavery in some form or other."<sup>1</sup> The ideal man is an aristocrat, looking down on the ordinary run of humanity as ultimately there for his benefit. Society may be organised into a series of grades, each of which presumably looks down appropriately on those beneath it. Nevertheless the cleavage between the highest group, the upper noble class, and the rest is more fundamental than any other division, and does in effect cut the society into two : freemen and slaves.

Moreover, Nietzsche's theory of value is definitely oligarchic, the doctrine of one whose ancestors might have sat in the Diet of Poland. Value does not lie in the community as a whole, less still in the lower class, nor even in the king and the government ; it resides in the privileged class of nobles, — "The essential thing in a good and healthy aristocracy is that it should feel itself to be not a function (whether of the kingship or of the commonwealth) but that it is their meaning and highest justification, — that accordingly, it should accept with a good conscience the sacrifice of an untold number of human beings, who for its benefit must be depressed and degraded into slaves and tools. Its fundamental belief must be that society is *not* allowed to exist for the sake of society ; but only as a substructure and scaffolding, by which a select kind of being may raise itself to its higher tasks and in general to a higher existence."<sup>2</sup>

This is stated very moderately : the aristocracy should accept

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 258.

## GOODNESS

the sacrifice of the others with a good conscience. But Nietzsche means something more than this, something less moderate. Aristocracies, he held, have always arisen by violence, by conquest; the incoming barbarians—nobles were always of barbarian origin—were stronger and more vital than those whom they conquered and enslaved; they were, Nietzsche says, “the more *complete* men (which at every level amounts to the same as ‘the more wholly beasts’)”.<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing reprehensible, Nietzsche declares, in this: it is all a matter of power and the will to power. “It is not surprising”, he says, “that the lambs should dislike the great birds of prey: but no reason for blaming the birds of prey lies in the fact that they catch little lambs.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Nietzsche thinks, it is absurd “to desire that strength should *not* express itself as strength, that it should *not* be a will to overpower, to overthrow, to become master, a thirst for enemies, resistances and triumphs”. “A quantum of power is just such a quantum of impulse, will, action”,—and that is the end of the matter.

Nietzsche’s view here is the outcome of that which he took in earlier days of the “Tragic Age” in Greece, and of the conception of the Renaissance which he formed under the influence of Burckhardt. Then he had looked with horrified admiration at the violence by which culture, as he understood it, was established, and he delighted to point out its dreadful and cruel nature. Later, in the time of *Human all too Human*, the horror increased, but now it has disappeared. The violence is justified; for it is an expression of the will to power, from which all values come.

The significance of his attitude may perhaps best be brought out by comparison with that of Burckhardt. Through Burckhardt Nietzsche learned that the development of individuality which was fostered by the Renaissance had its roots in something which was not culture, the violent, illegitimate, ruthless seizure of power. This Burckhardt disliked and condemned. “We see”, he says, “with frightful evidence a boundless ambition

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Genealogy of Morals*, i, § 13.

## NIETZSCHE

and thirst for greatness, independent of all means and consequences." And after detailing a series of deeds of blood and treachery, he says: "These are characteristic features of this age of overstrained and despairing passions and forces, and remind us of the burning of the temple of Diana at Ephesus in the time of Philip of Macedon".

Perhaps the most outstanding example is that of Cesare Borgia. Burckhardt's account is uncompromising. "His violent measures assumed the character of devilish wickedness which necessarily reacts upon the ends pursued. What was done in the struggle with the Roman nobles and with the tyrants of the Romagna exceeds in faithlessness and barbarity even that measure to which the Aragonese rulers of Naples had already accustomed the world and the genius for deception was also greater. . . . He himself used to wander about Rome in the night time with his guards, and there is every reason to believe that he did so not only because, like Tiberius, he shrank from showing his now repulsive features by daylight, but also to gratify his insane thirst for blood, perhaps even on the persons of those unknown to him."

Nietzsche knew this account, and did not question the facts. But he reversed Burckhardt's judgment. "We fundamentally misunderstand the beast of prey and the man of prey (for example Cesare Borgia), we misunderstand 'nature', so long as we seek for some 'morbidness' at the basis of this most healthy of all tropical monsters and growths, or in any way for a 'hell' inborn in them: — as almost all moralists hitherto have done."<sup>1</sup> These rank tropical growths, for Nietzsche, are the most desirable ones; and it is through them and their unscrupulous subjecting of other, lesser, people to their unrefined wishes that communities have been founded and the field of culture prepared.

Two points must be distinguished in order to understand this view: on the one hand, the violence used to found a community and to establish a society, whether on Nietzsche's or any other lines, in a situation where a society does not already effect-

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 197.

## GOODNESS

ively exist ; and on the other, the continued use of violence as an essential part of the activity of the ideal man after a society has been established, even according to the most approved pattern.

It may be useful to contrast Nietzsche's view here with that of Hegel, against which he sets his own in more or less conscious opposition.

Inside organised society, Hegel maintains, there is no longer room for heroes — men who exercise heroic violence on their fellows : their place is in uncivilised life. There, although they constrain other men, without any recognised authority to justify them, the inherent rationality of the institutions which they found and of the order which they establish, gives them a right against the selfish natural impulses of uncivilised men. But when the community has been established, and when law rules, the justification for private violence disappears. Heroes thus live on only in the interstices of society, and their heroism is in place only against nature and the enemies of society itself.

Of course, in these interstices there is abundant room for them ; the courage that faces disease, calamity and death for the sake of others will never die out, for even although the enmity of man to man and of nation to nation should finally be overcome, nature itself remains unconquered and in the end unconquerable. The irrational will always be at hand, and the violence of heroism against it is a part of the highest quality of human excellence. But, insists Hegel, violence of the private citizen within the state against others must give way to the rule of law.

From this view Nietzsche dissents. The hero, the man of selfish power, is not the means to social order, but is himself the final end ; states ought never to be so organised that heroism disappears within them. The uncertainty, the danger, the failure or absence of compelling law, which justify the violence of the hero, must be preserved inside society itself, as an essential part of it in its highest form.

The form of society in which this is secured, according to Nietzsche, is aristocracy ; and in his treatment of it he regards the aristocrat as the natural heir to the virtue and vitality of his



## GOODNESS

powerful, vengeful, malicious, mistrustful souls, ready for all that is dreadful, and hardened by privation and customary morality? The pleasure of cruelty, so that it is even counted as a virtue of such a soul under these conditions to be inventive and insatiable in cruelty. . . . Cruelty is one of the oldest festive joys of mankind.”<sup>1</sup> Later, however, the reservations preserved here die away. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche writes: “Almost everything that we call ‘higher culture’ rests on the spiritualising and deepening of *cruelty* — that is my thesis: that ‘wild beast’ has not been killed off at all, it lives, it blooms, it has only — deified itself. That which constitutes the painful voluptuousness of tragedy is cruelty.”<sup>2</sup> And he goes on to argue that if we are properly imbued with the spirit of cruelty we can extract pleasure from our own sufferings. From this point of view even the thinker is a sublimated torturer; “for he constrains his spirit to know against the wish of his heart — that is, to say No, where he might affirm, love, worship. . . . Even in every will to know there is a drop of cruelty.” Personal experience is very close to the surface here, and it is a puzzled man who asks himself the question: Why in such circumstances do you think at all? The only answer he can suggest, although he plainly is not satisfied with it, is this: “There is something cruel in the inclination of my mind”.

In the light of these statements we may perhaps realise the extreme lengths to which Nietzsche is prepared to carry the principle that the higher man, — the great man, the conqueror or the aristocrat — is of first value. The great man, Nietzsche thinks, is stimulated by the sight of a chaotic society, and seeks to reorganise it so that the man of the future, the aristocrat, may be produced. In so doing he must, Nietzsche thinks, annihilate millions of less perfect human beings, and he must be so constituted as not to be overwhelmed “by the suffering created, the like of which never existed before”.<sup>3</sup> The production of great individuals is for Nietzsche not only the main end, but is the only end of

<sup>1</sup> *Dawn of Day*, § 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 229.

<sup>3</sup> *Will to Power*, § 964.

society. "The revolution, confusion and distress of whole peoples is in my view of less importance than the distress of great individuals in their development."<sup>1</sup> In fact, he argues, "the many distresses of all these little beings" by themselves do not count at all; they are nothing except in so far as they enter the feelings of great men. As an example of his view he refers to Napoleon. "The Revolution made Napoleon possible; that is its justification. At a similar price we ought to desire the anarchistic collapse of our whole civilisation. Napoleon made nationalism possible: that is its excuse."<sup>2</sup> The principle is quite clear, and we can easily supply other examples for ourselves. Genghis Khan was a mightier conqueror than Napoleon. His Mongol Armies carried death and carnage from Tartary to the coasts of China and the waters of the Mediterranean, heaped up the dead against the walls of Mussulman cities so that the stormers might enter to slay all within, and drove the broken chivalry of Poland and Germany in ruin before the hail of their arrows. On Nietzsche's principles, the fear and destruction to be brought to the world of his time is a small price — perhaps no price at all — to pay for the value he gave to the world merely by existing. Nietzsche is definite on this point. The value of the great man is inherent in himself, his higher nature depends on the difference between him and others, on the height he stands above them and not at all on any effect he produces, "even if it should be the shattering of the globe itself".<sup>3</sup>

We have already seen the motives behind this worship of strength: but the judgment which approved and accepted it in all its crudity is perhaps more difficult to understand. Nietzsche himself, however, has provided a key. "An active little boy will stare ironically if you ask him: 'Would you like to become more virtuous?' — but he will open his eyes wide if you ask him: 'Would you like to become stronger than your comrades?'"<sup>4</sup> An active little boy, barely adolescent — judging on behalf of a weary man who in his day had missed the crude barbarity of ordinary boyhood, and had sipped his chocolate

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 965.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 877.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 876.    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* § 918.

at the village inn when the gay dogs drank their beer ! Nietzsche never quite got over adolescence.

This, however, is only one side of him ; on another he was a cultured, fastidious man, with desires, tastes and values incomprehensible to callow youth. And we have now to consider how this other aspect co-operates with the first to produce a peculiar attitude to life. Nietzsche's admiration is not reserved for the mere conqueror, but extends to other types also, so he passes from the barbarian to the aristocrat, asking what other features in addition to strength mark the man of quality.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* he gives an answer to this question in which the stress still lies largely on the aspect of violence. "Life itself", he says, "is essentially appropriating, injuring, overmastering of the strange and weaker, suppressing, hardness, and at least, and at the mildest, expropriation."<sup>1</sup> "Expropriation does not pertain to a corrupt or imperfect and primitive society : it belongs to the essence of the living as a fundamental organic function, it is a consequence of the organism's own will to power, which is just its will to life." The aristocrat, from this point of view, is essentially an expropriator, his view of life and his conception of excellence being determined by his frank recognition of that fact. He "feels that he himself determines values, he does not need to be approved of, he judges : 'What is harmful to me is harmful in itself, he knows that he himself alone confers any honour on things, he is a *creator of values*. . . . In the foreground there is the feeling of plenitude, of power, which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of a wealth which desires to bestow and give away."<sup>2</sup> Then follows a sentence which throws into high relief a phase of Nietzsche's character which we have already discovered. "Moreover, the man of quality helps the unfortunate, but not, or almost not, from pity ; rather from an urge generated by the super-abundance of power." Nietzsche is not willing to abandon utterly the form of behaviour which arises from the dictates of ordinary humanity, but he changes the motive, attributing to the benefactor the will

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 259.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 260.

to power which he himself resented so bitterly when he thought himself the object of it. Now he is looking at the situation from the other end ; and so he retains the act but excludes pity, on the ground that it is a sign of weakness. "The man of quality honours himself as the powerful one, also as one who has power over himself, who can speak or be silent, who exercises severity and hardness against himself, and who venerates all severity and hardness." With this self-confidence and pride there is conjoined "a typical reverence for age and tradition — all law rests on this double reverence — a belief and prejudice in favour of his ancestors and to the disadvantage of newcomers".

In *The Will to Power* the picture is given in greater detail. The aristocrat, as a member of a small class of the privileged *élite*, has a double relationship ; on the one hand, to the mass of the servile population beneath him, on the other to the members of his own class. In this situation, says Nietzsche, he has "the conviction that he has duties only towards those like him, towards others he behaves as he thinks fit, that only *inter pares* is justice to be hoped for".<sup>1</sup> And he adds, "Unfortunately it cannot be counted on for a long time yet". One part of this conception is simple, the relation to the lower classes : the privileged aristocrat is the creator of values and others have no rights at all against him. The second part is harder to grasp. Nietzsche speaks of justice — and of duties. What are those duties, and how are they determined ? In seeking an answer to this question we have to consider the relations of the aristocrats to one another. They are the spiritual heirs, if not the bodily descendants, of the barbarian conqueror, and his ruthlessness and egoism is in their blood. They are therefore intrinsically hostile to one another. But if each of them were to assert himself continually on every possible occasion and increase his feeling of power by destroying as many of the others as possible by every means at his command, the class would quickly disappear. The assertion of the will to power must therefore be restrained, and a code of behaviour instituted to prevent wanton

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 943.

## GOODNESS

and surprise attack. Thus a strict etiquette grows up which, externally at least, reverences in others the quality which is common to all. It is thus a guard, a mechanism of defence, whereby each individual hides himself from others, and prevents them from coming into touch with his real being. Thus, says Nietzsche, the aristocrat cultivates a "frivolous appearance in word, dress, attitude, with a stoical hardness and self-mastery" which protects him "from all rude curiosity". With this goes a "slow gesture and a slow glance". Most things, the aristocrat assumes, or pretends to assume, are not worth much, and a sceptical demeanour is therefore fitting for him: he must look at the world around him with hauteur and a supercilious air. Speaking personally for the class, Nietzsche adds: "We admire with difficulty".

With this we may connect a more important quality, viz. the ability to endure pain without complaint. This no doubt is a natural quality of the barbarian warrior—"the brave"—and might be taken for granted in his spiritual descendant, but Nietzsche gives it a deeper meaning, speaking of "the endurance of poverty, distress and even of sickness", qualities not necessarily associated with the "natural" aristocrat, because presumably not much required, and certainly not highly relished by the first of the species whom Nietzsche studied, Theognis of Megara. Nietzsche is beginning to shift his ground. His fundamental idea is that the aristocrat—his own ideal self—must be physically strong and agile; a lover of sport and amusement, he must excel in competitive pastimes and revel in every form of free joyous expression. The hunt, the dance, the tourney must be his delight. But the tension which exists within the class, the competition between its members, which in principle knows no limit, tends to curb the joyousness and abandon of the expression, leading to constraint, guardedness and self-concealment. The aristocrat, like Nietzsche himself, has to wear a mask. He has for ever to reassure himself of his inherent worth, treat the merely "gifted" with irony, and insist on the necessity for noble birth. There is, of course, fear in this attitude; and it involves a collusive

## NIETZSCHE

appeal by each aristocrat to the others, asking implicitly for their recognition that he is of value. Thus the pride of the aristocrat, as Nietzsche sees him, turns over into vanity, in Schopenhauer's sense of the term.

The inhibition which marks aristocratic behaviour in Nietzsche's conception of it involves real impoverishment. It is enough to mention one point. Gallantry is of course a duty of the aristocrat, so Nietzsche puts down as one item in the schedule, "Pleasure in women, as perhaps a lesser, but finer and lighter kind of being. What happiness to meet beings who have always dancing and silliness and dress in their minds." Having had scanty success with serious women, Nietzsche turns, in thought, to their more frivolous sisters. With them, in actuality, he seems to have had little to do, and when they came across him they must have regarded him, if at all, with the interest to be given to mysterious oddities. And so Nietzsche pays them back, gently but firmly. "There is a *slavish* love", he says, "which subordinates itself and gives itself away : which idealises and deceives itself,—there is a *divine* love which despises and loves and reshapes and elevates the loved one." Nietzsche insists on his superiority, and on his contempt, but forgivingly he would make the pretty dears worthy of him.

But we have not yet answered our question : What does duty mean for the aristocrat ? We have found a code of behaviour imposed on him, and we are told of his jealous insistence on its observance by others. Each demands from all the respect of ceremonious treatment, and in turn accords it as a safeguard, as indirectly a recognition of his own worth, and as a mask for his real personality. But that observance of the rules of decorum is not all that duty means, even for Nietzsche ; we have to look further.

The formal politeness which the aristocrat shows to others, and the respect for himself which it indirectly implies and ensures, is based very largely, in Nietzsche's view, on reverence for the ancestors and on pride of birth. But a difficulty arises here, the difficulty which embarrassed Nietzsche's treatment in *The Use*

## GOODNESS

*and Abuse of History* and his view of morality in *The Dawn of Day*. We depend on the past and on tradition for strength, and yet the past binds us, confines us and destroys our freedom. This dilemma is the fundamental one which confronts Nietzsche's philosophy at every stage in all its branches — the apparent incompatibility of freedom and its conditions.

The solution which Nietzsche adopts in the present connection is as follows. The ideal man, the man of culture, must be trained ; otherwise he is not even strong, for apparent strength without discipline is weakness. But this training, in the aristocratic group, does not come by law, argument or persuasion. It is less conscious, more ingrained, habitual rather than reflective. And it is secured by the practice of living in a society where that society's ways are regarded with unquestioning awe, their value lying in their antiquity and in the wisdom of the ancestors. Given this reverence, the mind is formed, and through the functioning of habit the implied standards of behaviour are followed without question.

But this involves the subjection of the individual to the group, and in *The Dawn of Day* Nietzsche had proclaimed the incompatibility of freedom and customary morality. Thus the freedom which the good life demands, and without which it is not possible, seems in conflict with the conditions of strength and character without which that freedom is valueless. The solution which Nietzsche offers is as follows. Customary morality must provide the training ; for without it the aristocratic qualities cannot be attained. But it must be transcended. When the training has done all it can, the pupil must step forth from it and become free. But, we may ask : How does he do this ? Where does he go when he steps forth from the protection of custom ?

The most explicit answer which Nietzsche gives to this further question is contained in *The Genealogy of Morals*. There the entire function of all recorded and unrecorded history is said to be that of training beings who can behave regularly on a voluntary basis, or, as Nietzsche puts it, can keep their promises

to themselves and others. The content of habit, it is implied, is valueless, and the control by it is not itself a good. But through it there is acquired a capacity for conscious adherence to a self-imposed rule, which will make behaviour calculable and orderly. The man who is thus trained, the man of good breeding, can lay down a law for himself and adhere to it, even to his hurt. He is a sovereign being, a free man, a man who has become free, who can really promise, the master of the free will. In this way, Nietzsche adds, he acquires a sense of responsibility which raises him altogether above the animal level.

In *The Will to Power* itself the same line is taken, self-consistency and self-control becoming the highest qualities of the good man, and everything else being subordinated to them. Speaking of possible disciples Nietzsche says: "To such men as concern me at all I wish suffering, abandonment, sickness, ill-treatment, indignity — I wish that deep self-contempt, the torture of self-distrust, the misery of the defeated may not remain unknown: I have no pity for them, because I wish for them the only wish that can prove to-day whether a man has value or not — whether he can stand fast".<sup>1</sup> Standing fast is *the* value; to what one stands fast is of minor importance, perhaps of none. Thus the answer to our question would appear to be that the aristocrat, as a free man, acquires duties by laying them on himself, and their only value consists in his resolution to adhere to them.

This answer, however, does not dispose of the problem fully. Where, we must still ask, do the duties which the free man lays on himself come from? Nietzsche's reply, of course, is that the free man creates them: but it is beside the point. Does he create them out of nothing? Is there any criterion of them when they have been created? Is there anything to distinguish duty from obstinacy? There are the crucial points: how does Nietzsche deal with them?

In various passages he speaks of the awful burden lying on the creator of values and the sense of responsibility which he

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 910.



## GOODNESS

must have. But he does not make clear to whom, if to anyone, he is responsible, or how any judgment is to be made on the way in which he has discharged his task. The solutions adopted for this problem by other thinkers are in general excluded for Nietzsche because they tend to involve some objective consideration — the universality of the law, the good of the community or the like. For Nietzsche no such objective criterion can exist, for if the great man, the free man, is really the final standard of value and the creator of it, no other value, no criterion, can be set up against him or over him, by which he can be judged. It is true that Nietzsche does try to evade this difficulty by asserting that the great man will feel impelled to organise society in such a way that other great men may be produced. But the suggestion, if taken seriously as a duty or objective criterion by which to judge the great man, is inconsistent with the main line of Nietzsche's thought.

The problem with which Nietzsche is faced here appears also in his treatment of crime and the criminal. We have already seen that at least from the days of *Human all too Human* he had a kindly feeling for the criminal and resented the treatment ordinarily meted out to him. The denial of free will and responsibility in general carried with it the denial of the responsibility of the criminal in particular; and Nietzsche tried to free the unfortunate sinner against society from the stain of guilt. The same point of view reappears in *The Will to Power*, where punishment is again discussed and its rationality denied. One form of the argument is instructive. There is no such thing, Nietzsche declares, as retribution, for such an idea involves belief in an equivalence of action "which in all real relationships simply does not appear. Every action can not be paid back: between 'real individuals' there are no equal actions, and consequently there is no 'requital'. . . . When I do anything, I am very far from thinking that it will be possible for anyone at all to do the like: it belongs to me. . . . One cannot pay back: what is done against me would always be another act."<sup>1</sup> The isolation of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 925.

## NIETZSCHE

individual, which is at the root of Nietzsche's thought, appears here in the form of the denial of the very possibility of objective responsibility and justice.

Moreover, Nietzsche has sympathetically emphasised the good qualities of the criminal, because he too is a rebel against society, the audacity and strength of character which the criminal must have in order to set the community at defiance and to act from his own egoistic desires and not from craven slavish motives. Indeed the assimilation of the criminal and the hero is carried so far that it is difficult to see how they are to be distinguished.

But however that may be, the general tendency of Nietzsche's thought is clear — away from society and from outward triumphs towards the individual and towards inward self-mastery. The ultimate power, in which all value lies, is not that which lays the world in ruins, but that which dominates the self and constrains it to a persistent course of action. "It is a consolation to me", says Nietzsche, "to know that over the smoke and dirt of the hollows where men live, there is a higher, clearer humanity, which will always be very small in number (for everything outstanding is in its essence rare) : one belongs to it, not because one is more gifted or virtuous or heroic or loving than the people down below there — but because one is colder, clearer, more far-sighted, lonelier, because one endures, prefers, demands the loneliness as happiness, privilege, yea as condition of existence, because one lives amidst clouds and lightning as amidst one's equals, and no less amidst sunbeams, dewdrops, snowflakes, and all that needs must come from the heights, and which, when it moves, must eternally move only in the direction from above to below. Aspirations *towards* the height are not ours.— The heroes, martyrs, geniuses and enthusiasts are not sufficiently quiet, patient, refined, cold and slow for us."<sup>1</sup> And in the same spirit we are told that after generations of training a plenitude of weighty and important things may unite in the sublime man, "even if he is quite delicate and fragile".

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 993.

## GOODNESS

Thus the barbarian conqueror, after turning aristocrat, has at length become a cultured recluse.

The truth of the suggestion made earlier that Nietzsche's conception of the good life, his ideal man, was not to ordinary eyes constructed according to a single pattern, but was a varying union of discordant elements, is now obvious. The question is not what we could make of these factors, but rather what Nietzsche himself made of them. Did they fall into one coherent living picture in his mind, caught into unity by some bond that has escaped us? Where did the conception come from? Was it a creation of logical thinking, or was it in the end the vague unrealised ideal which it seems to be, compacted of every wish from that of boyish adventure to those of religious hope and poetic beauty? It is hard to tell. But Nietzsche himself has something to add. "I was afraid among men, I desired among men and nothing quieted me. Then I went into solitude and created the Superman. And when I created him, I arranged the great veil for him and let the noonday shine around him."<sup>1</sup> A veiled figure in the sunlight, erected by fear, yearning and loneliness.

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xiv, p. 108.

## XXVII

### BADNESS

“THE opposite of the Superman”, says Nietzsche, “is the last man : I created him at the same time as the former.”<sup>1</sup> Having examined the one creation, we have now to consider the other.

In the light of our previous discussion it is easy to understand why Nietzsche adopted the straightforward and simple point of view of his first guide to the aristocracy, Theognis of Megara. We — the privileged land-owning class — are the good ; they — the unprivileged workers, farm labourers and city dwellers — are the bad. That is what the words mean. “Good” is the term which indicates the qualities and code of men of rank ; “bad” is the term which indicates the qualities and code of the men of no rank.

There is of course an assumption behind this apparently simple identification : the man of rank is strong, his qualities and code are those of strength ; whereas on the other hand the man of no rank, the slave, is weak, his qualities and code are those of the weak. The justice of this assumption, however, is not altogether obvious, and we shall see later that it causes Nietzsche some trouble.

The code of behaviour proper to the lower unprivileged class, resembles that of the masters in that it necessarily sets out from the point of view of the class to which it belongs ; since the two classes are opposed, their points of view are also opposed, and so is the content of their codes. This is necessary, in Nietzsche’s view, and of course desirable. The slaves are there for the benefit of the masters, and they must stay in their proper place. They must not try to acquire the qualities of masters and break down the line of division between the two groups. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xiv, p. 108.

## BADNESS

qualities which they commend — which they call good or perhaps virtuous — must be those of the docile slave ; and they must condemn the qualities which raise the aristocrat above them and give him his value. For this, says Nietzsche, they have a special term ; the qualities which befit the aristocrat and do not befit the slave, they call evil or wicked. The two antitheses — good against bad, and good against evil — express the two contrasting perspectives and codes of behaviour. The more generally recognised of these antitheses is that of the lower unprivileged class, the contrast of good and evil, and to it Nietzsche applies the term morality. The privileged man, the man of quality, therefore rejects moral standards, he is beyond good and evil, he is essentially an immoralist.

If we look more closely into the conception of morality which Nietzsche develops as a result of this general scheme of things, we find that it is not free from discrepancies. In a satisfactory universe, if there were one, the unprivileged man, the natural slave, would have a rule of behaviour which would keep him in his place but would not affect the master class. Moreover, it should make him more efficient for the master's purposes, a docile, but also a competent, slave. It must make him contented with his lot, a willing recipient of the ill-treatment meted out to him, without destroying his capacity to labour in that lot and endure the hardness of it. But the slave should have no tendency to apply the same standard of behaviour to the master, or expect him to be virtuous and just — in the slave's sense of justice. The spirit of the herd should rule in the herd — but should not reach out beyond it : the leaders of the herd require a radically different valuation of their own actions, as do those who are independent, or the " beasts of prey, etc."

The desirable state of affairs, however, does not easily arise, for morality itself contains no such principle of limitation, and the caste system is an immoralist rather than a moral product. On the whole, therefore, the lower classes have to be kept in their places, and not allowed to interfere with or judge their betters.

## NIETZSCHE

The difficulty here is a serious one, for Nietzsche recognises that the moral attitude is the fundamental one for the great mass of the population ; it is the embodiment of the greatest values which they recognise. And accordingly there is a force continually in operation, hostile to the best organisation of society, and destructive of the true values, namely, those of aristocratic privilege. The secret of the good life, Nietzsche thinks, is given in the catch-word, "Live dangerously". It would appear that from time to time the aristocrat is likely to have ample opportunity for carrying out such an injunction.

Nevertheless the difficulty of maintaining an aristocratic order of rank should not be insuperable, for the moral code of the slaves is one emanating from and expressing weakness, and those under its influence, even if they are misguided enough to judge aristocratic behaviour harshly, should not be in a position to make their protest effective. The slaves are slaves because they are weak and lack the will to power.

This reassurance, however, must not be given too much weight, for there are two major complications which affect it, and in the end may render it nugatory. In the first place Nietzsche finds it difficult to maintain the full ruthless validity of the aristocratic point of view ; in the second, morality does not always show the enfeebling influence attributed to it. We may consider these points in turn.

We have seen the elements in Nietzsche's nature and circumstances which led him to develop his peculiar conception of the good life : and we have noted that the functionlessness and social frustration which fell to his lot twisted his ideal into a demand for satisfactions in the absence of the conditions by which they may be secured. But these very conditions themselves also made an appeal to him ; and the loneliness which he commended was not always a genuine free choice. The common life and the common lot, which he so officiously scorned and sought to suppress in his conception of the ideal man, could not be eradicated from his heart. So we find at times that he seems to lose courage, to yearn for the morality which he condemns, and to

## BADNESS

feel that without it the good life is not fully good. There is treason in the camp of the man of prey.

In general, when Nietzsche becomes conscious of the conflict within him between the demands of morality, the old traditional morality of his boyhood, and the immoralist ideal which he consciously sets up before him, he tends to lay the responsibility for it at the door of morality itself, as another charge against it. It is in the "higher natures", he maintains, that the conflict becomes conscious, and its presence in them is a sign that they have been corrupted and turned aside from their high calling.<sup>1</sup> But he does not remain consistently at this point of view, for he sometimes emphasises the value and even the necessity of morality as a training for freedom. We have already seen one form of this, viz. the importance of customary morality for training the will; and similar ideas recur more than once. Morality, he alleges, is now a burden which we must shake off, nevertheless he notes: "Deepest thankfulness for what morality has hitherto accomplished".<sup>2</sup> We immoralists, he admits, do not know where we are going when we leave the soil of our homeland and venture into an uncharted sea; "But this soil itself has nourished the power which is driving us forth into the distance".

We have seen too how the criminal attracted and almost fascinated Nietzsche, how he tended to excuse and even glorify him as a man of strong adventurous character. But now and again he recoils from him, regarding his will to power as indecent and excessive; at times he even looks upon the barbarian with dislike. "The barbarians", he says, "showed that *the ability to observe measure* was not to be found in them: they feared and slandered the passions and impulses of nature", condemning self-restraint as weakness, and confounding the moderation of weak natures with the self-control of the strong. "The best things have been slandered, because weak ones or intemperate swine have thrown a bad light upon them — and the best have then remained hidden — and have often misunderstood them—

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 400.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 404.

## NIETZSCHE

selves.”<sup>1</sup> The best men, therefore, are to be distinguished from the weak and from intemperate swine. “Men of power are the very opposite of the vicious and unbridled, although under certain circumstances they do things for which a lesser man would be convicted of vice and intemperance.”<sup>2</sup> The last clause here undoubtedly weakens the general effect, and Nietzsche does not improve matters by going on to give Cesare Borgia as an example of a maligned great man ; but it is clear that he does intend to draw the line somewhere. There ought to be some distinction between greatness and mere violent self-indulgence.

Elsewhere, leaving the difficult case of the human brute aside, Nietzsche insists that the strong man delights to restrain himself. The old Greek doctrine of *Nothing too Much* “applies to men of overflowing strength—not to the mediocre . . . and the gods of the barbarians do not express anything of the joy of measure—they are neither simple, nor light, nor moderate”.<sup>3</sup>

Overflowing power, thus, restrains itself, and lives more or less decently ; and indeed it voluntarily copies the practices of asceticism. Of course the passions must not be destroyed, but they must be enlisted in our service “and for this it may be necessary to tyrannise over them for a long time”,<sup>4</sup> before they are allowed to go free again. But when that has been accomplished, “it is the richness in personality, the fullness in oneself, the overflowing and giving away, the instinctive well-being and affirming, which bring great love and great sacrifice into being”.<sup>5</sup> Great love and the power to make great sacrifices are now placed on a level with “the will to be master, to encroach, the inner certainty of having a right to everything”.

Nietzsche goes even further than this. As we shall see more fully later, he contends that the instincts which rob man of power and bring him to destruction have actually gained the upper hand in the modern world over the instincts which elevate and ennoble man. “The will to nothing has become master over the will to life.”<sup>6</sup> Then he asks abruptly :

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 870.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* § 384.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 871.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* § 338.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 940.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* § 401.



## BADNESS

"Is this true? Is there not perhaps a greater guarantee of life and of the species in the victory of the weak and the mediocre? Is it perhaps only a means in the total movement of life, a slowing of the tempo? A protection against something worse?" Then he continues:

"Suppose the *strong* were to become master in everything, and even in the setting up of values; let us infer how they would think about ill-health, suffering, sacrifice. Self-contempt on the part of the weak would be the result, they would try to disappear and eliminate themselves. And would this perhaps be *desirable*? — do you really want a world in which the after-thought of the weak, their refinement, their consideration, intelligence, flexibility, were lacking?" Nietzsche is appealing to Zarathustra not to get rid of his creator altogether.

The second feature which complicates and mars Nietzsche's solution of the problem of morality is that the servile class will not remain in its proper place. It may dominate the masters; actually, in Nietzsche's estimation, it has done so completely. The weak apparently have conquered the strong.

This fact places Nietzsche in a difficulty. On the one hand he cannot and will not gainsay it; for it provides him with his main grievance and is the driving force behind much of his writing. In himself he had experienced how little actual power society may accord to the man of quality, and how much it may influence and control him even in his solitudes. And yet on the other, if full weight is given to the actual domination of the higher type by the lower, the conclusion would seem to follow that the so-called lower may be really the stronger, and the so-called higher the weaker — a conclusion ruinous to Nietzsche's whole scheme of thought.

In considering how Nietzsche attempts to cope with this dilemma, we may find a natural starting-point in the explanation he offers of the failure of the "higher type" to dominate the lower. For this, in his opinion, part of the responsibility lies on the higher type itself. The experience of history, he tells us, shows how strong races decimate one another by war, desire for

## NIETZSCHE

power and adventure. The very strength of their emotions leads to the squandering of their energy—"power", says Nietzsche, "is no longer capitalised, mental disturbance arises from the excessive tension".<sup>1</sup> The higher races therefore, he alleges, tend to wear themselves out, and "periods of deep exhaustion and indolence arise. All great ages have to be paid for. . . . The stronger are afterwards weaker, have less will, are more absurd than the average weak."

"There are squandering races", Nietzsche says, adding with a defiant apology: "Permanence in itself has really no value. We ought to prefer a shorter existence for the species but one richer in value."

Moreover, this natural tendency on the part of the higher types of man, as Nietzsche conceives them, to exhaust themselves and exterminate one another, is reinforced by the corrupting influence which ordinary morality exercises upon them. "How the aristocratic world", Nietzsche exclaims, "is for ever bleeding and weakening itself! By virtue of its noble instincts it throws its privileges away, and by virtue of its refined super-culture it interests itself on behalf of the people, the weak, the poor, the poetry of the little ones, etc."<sup>2</sup> The "noble instincts", as they are called in this passage, are really those of morality itself; and when they gain entrance into the individual's soul, they arouse in him pity for others, the most deadly of the corrupting virtues; and by leading to self-abnegation they ruin his higher nature. In this way, Nietzsche insists repeatedly, Christianity ruined Pascal.

We may now turn to the other side of the situation; having considered the weakness of the strong, we may proceed to consider the strength of the weak. In the first place, we may note the strength and range of the class which has to be kept down in servility. It does not consist only of the rabble and the refuse of the population, but includes most of the state as ordinarily understood, all industry and commerce, and even most of the learned. We have seen that in *Human all too Human* Nietzsche

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 864.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 938.

deposed the artist from the high place accorded to him in the writings of the previous period, and set up the scientist in his stead, exalting the latter to the dignity of the higher man. But now, having reconsidered the matter, he consigns the scientist to the ranks of the uninspired, thereby making him a member of the servile class. "A high culture can stand only on a broad basis, on a strong and a soundly consolidated mediocrity. Science works in its service and attends upon it — and so does art itself. Science cannot wish for anything better for itself; it belongs as such to a middling sort of man — it is out of place among the exceptional — there is nothing aristocratic and still less anything anarchistic in its instincts."<sup>1</sup> The power of the middle section of the community, Nietzsche adds, "is maintained by commerce, and above all finance; the instinct of the great financiers is against all extremes,—the Jews are thus the most conservative power in our Europe, which is so threatened and insecure".

This massive organised community, presupposed by the *élite* class, is also moved by the will to power, and the code of behaviour which it inculcates is designed to perpetuate men of its own type. This is a cardinal doctrine for Nietzsche. Every code of behaviour is a tool in the struggle for power, a device whereby some type of man seeks to secure himself and overcome his rivals. And the code of the servile class, Nietzsche maintains, is primarily directed against exceptional people, against anyone stepping out of the common ranks and pursuing his own interest without consideration for others. The *élite*, no doubt, form a group, but they are primarily individuals, and their group relationships are external to their inward being. The servile class, on the contrary, is primarily a herd, and with it the interest of the herd comes first. Its code of behaviour, therefore, is one which binds men together, and leads them to subordinate themselves as individuals to the welfare of others. This unity gives them enormous strength. Individually they are feeble; collectively, when moved by group loyalty and the morality it engenders, they are almost irresistible.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 864.

## NIETZSCHE

Moreover, within the group the individual gains the results which only great strength could secure for him if he were alone, viz. security and comfort. "The pleasant feelings with which the good, benevolent, just man imbues us (in opposition to the tension, fear, which the great new man evokes) are our personal feelings of security and equality : the herd-animal thus glorifies the herd-nature and then feels at ease. This judgment of comfort masks itself with fine words — and thus morality arises."<sup>1</sup> "When one hears the moral imperative within one, in the way in which altruism understands it, one belongs to the herd."<sup>2</sup>

In one passage Nietzsche speaks of four virtues of "slave morality", viz. "humility, chastity, selflessness and absolute obedience", but elsewhere he gives a longer list. The conditions and desires approved of by the herd are those which are "peaceful, fair, moderate, modest, reverent, respectful, brave, chaste, honest, true, believing, straightforward, trustworthy, resigned, compassionate, helpful, conscientious, simple, liberal, just, generous, forbearing, obedient, disinterested, without jealousy, kind, industrious".<sup>3</sup> And by virtue of these qualities, shown by members of the group in their relationships to one another, the group seeks to preserve the type of man who belongs to it. Whereas to others, to individuals who assert themselves against or apart from the herd, it is "hostile, unfair, intemperate, immodest, arrogant, inconsiderate, cowardly, untruthful, false, merciless, deceitful, envious, revengeful".

Nietzsche speaks at times of three levels within the servile group and consequently of three main forms of virtue in which the self-assertion and will to power asserts itself there. The first demand is for freedom, the second for justice, the third for love. Love is the highest expression of morality, and it comes to us, as a principle, Nietzsche contends, from the small community of Israel. "It is a more passionate soul", he says, "which glows here under the ashes of humility and wretchedness : it was neither Greek, nor Indian, nor in any way German." "The song in honour of love which Paul wrote, is not a Christian thing,

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 285.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 286.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 284.

## BADNESS

but a Jewish blaze of the eternal flame, which is Semitic.”<sup>1</sup> Christianity has taken it over, of course, but all that it has done, Nietzsche avers, is that with this flame it has raised the spiritual temperature of the cooler and nobler races, which otherwise might not have become moral. To those who feel themselves weak, Nietzsche says, love gives the highest feeling of power, and under its influence “one does much more than one would do from obedience and virtue. Here is the happiness of the herd, the feeling of the community in great and small things, the living feeling of unity as a totality of the feeling of life. Helping, caring for, being useful, arouse the feeling of power: visible success, expression of joy, underline the feeling of power: nor is pride lacking, in the form of the congregation, the House of God, the elect.”<sup>2</sup>

Morality thus makes the group strong, and it gives to those within the group not only the feeling of power but also in some measure power itself. Moreover, as we have seen, in spite of the aristocrat's claim to superiority and the charm solitude has for higher men, common humanity is in them as well as over against them; the moral imperative speaks with their own voice as well as with that of others; and with all their freedom and ruthless arrogance they are easily infected with an evil conscience, which denies their cherished values and asserts those of the herd. Christianity, the highest and therefore worst form of morality, is for Nietzsche the greatest corruptor. “What do we fight against in Christianity?” he asks. And the answer is: “That it wishes to destroy the strong, that it wishes to weaken their courage, take advantage of their bad hours and times of weariness, turn their proud confidence into unrest and distress of conscience, that it is able to make noble instincts poisonous and ill, until their force, their will to power, turns backwards, turns against themselves — until the strong are destroyed by the excesses of their contempt and ill-treatment of themselves”.<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere Nietzsche speaks of the perversion of the higher men in a less excited tone. The trick of the herd, he says, “in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 176.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 252.

respect of the exceptions up above it, the stronger, mightier, wiser, more fruitful ones, is to persuade them to become guardians, shepherds, watchmen,—to become its head servants”.<sup>1</sup> Their ability, insight and strength are thus expended not on their own behalf, but on that of the group, and they have been converted from something rather like wolves into high-grade sheep-dogs.

But the considerations which have emerged in the course of this analysis have not removed the difficulty with which Nietzsche’s view was confronted ; for they seem to avoid the paradox of the victory of the weak over the strong by assigning the greatest effective strength to the so-called weak, and regarding the so-called strong as their natural prey. But the acceptance of such a conclusion would be fatal to Nietzsche’s whole outlook on life, implicitly denying his own claim to be strong and noble and great, and branding him as a distressful failure. This must not be allowed to happen. What can be done to prevent it ?

Nietzsche does not meet this challenge directly, nor does he seem to be fully aware of the contradiction which his view involves. An example may help to indicate the point. At the time of *The Will to Power* he wrote a number of paragraphs against the Darwinian theory, belittling its exponents. Most of what he says is of no importance and merely repeats the misconceptions and prejudices with which the orthodox greeted the new and disturbing idea. But there is one fundamental misconception which deserves mention : Nietzsche confuses the fitness for survival with strength in some undefined sense of individual prowess. Darwin’s school, he says, “counts on the struggle for existence, the death of living beings and the survival of the most robust and best gifted : consequently it imagines a steady increase of perfection for living things. We have ascertained the opposite, viz. that in the struggle for life chance serves the weak just as much as the strong ; that cunning often makes up for strength with advantage ; that fertility of the species stands in noteworthy relation to the chances of destruction.” Like many another, Nietzsche failed to realise what “fitness”

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 280.

## BADNESS

meant in Darwin's writings and confused adjustment to the environment with strength of muscle and capacity for single combat — without weapons. Elsewhere he admits intelligence to be a factor in strength, the factor which gives man strength against nature and the lower animals, but he is prone to forget this at critical moments, and to set it aside, as he does here, labelling it mere cunning. And so he appears to assert that the fittest do not survive, not realising that in Darwin's context fitness means just fitness to survive. The same weakness appears in his treatment of the general problem we are considering : he does not think clearly what strength means, and he is unwilling to assign it to those whom he dislikes and whose power he resents, even if by their performance they have shown themselves to be possessed of it.

But although his blindness disables him from realising clearly the difficulty he had to meet and precludes any direct answer to the challenge, it does not prevent him from making indirect replies, designed to set the problem aside. The first of these is an attack on the morality of morals and religion, the second an insistence on their debilitating nature, the third the thought of a better time to come, the fourth an attack on Christianity, the fifth an appeal to art, and the sixth a proclamation of himself. With this his philosophy ends.

## THE IMMORALIST

THROUGHOUT his writings, from the days of his boyhood onwards, Nietzsche showed a delight — in his own terminology, a wicked delight — in tracing seemly things back to unseemly origins ; “ truth ” back to “ falsehood ”, “ good ” back to “ evil ”. Now he uses this derivation as an argument against accepted standards. What at first was a sad or a cynical reflection becomes now a moral, or quasi-moral, criticism. His treatment, however, is complex and unsystematic ; all we can do here is try to lay hold of the main features.

Morality, we are told, is a device by which a particular type of man maintains himself ; and in establishing his code and enforcing it on others he uses the ordinary means which anyone, moral, unmoral or immoral, would apply in such a situation. He imposes his will by every means in his power ; he lies and cheats unscrupulously. “ The domination of virtue is not established by virtue itself ; with virtue itself one renounces power, and loses the will to power.”<sup>1</sup> “ The victory of a moral ideal is gained, like any other victory, by ‘ immoral ’ means : force, lying, defamation, injustice.” “ Morality ”, Nietzsche states, “ is just as ‘ immoral ’ as any other thing on earth ; morality itself is a form of immorality.” Then he exclaims : “ The great *liberation* which this insight brings. Contradiction is removed from things, the homogeneity in all events is *saved*. . . .”<sup>2</sup> This is not mere delight in the general logical coherence of things or in the uniformity of nature ; it is specific. Nietzsche is throwing off the load of guilt that morality lays on his shoulders — on the shoulders, he would say, of anyone — and he is retorting to the patterns of virtue : You are no better than I am, you hypocrites.

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, §§ 305, 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 308.



## THE IMMORALIST

One is reminded of his cry to his sister : " You cannot think how lonely and ' concealed ' I always appear to myself amid all the amiable Tartuffery of those people whom you call good ". And one can realise the pleasure he has in declaring that, with all their morality, and indeed because of it, his censors are as bad as the more brazen-faced immoralists they condemn.

In developing this point, Nietzsche links up morality with religion ; for, in the first instance at least, the moral code is determined by priests. Nietzsche's view of religion, and consequently of the nature and function of priestcraft, is not quite unambiguous ; and when it seems to him to reflect the code and outlook of an aristocratic or caste society, he inclines to approve of it. Thus he commends the Law of Manu, which stereotyped the caste divisions of Brahmanical India, and he expresses admiration for the gods of ancient Greece. Buddhism too he sometimes commends — it was a gentleman's religion ; and he has a good word to say for ancient Israel, in the far-off days when Jahwe was still a jealous tribal God and had not been moralised into the God of all the earth. But at other times the tolerance falls away : all religion, he reflects, is founded on a " holy lie ", and is the product of priestcraft. Christianity, he comes to think, is the worst of all religions, because it is the best, and because it has brought the most powerful nations under its sway. And as this latter view, with its preoccupation with Christianity, is that to which his thought tends at this stage, we may confine our attention to it.

The priest, then, is the founder of religion and the author of the moral code, his object being to make himself supreme and to perpetuate his type. He is, of course, a man of ability, and so he sets himself to secure his position against the warrior caste and against the lower classes by creating a proper mental atmosphere. He must arrogate to himself an unquestioned authority, he must make the members of the community feel that every event that touches them is conditioned by laws of morality and religion known to the priest, and he must extend his power widely without his hand being seen in it. He does this by the conception

of a life beyond death, where morality and religion reign unchecked.

To achieve these ends he diverts the attention of those whom he would control from the ordinary causal sequence of events revealed by experience, and trains his dupes to believe that the course of things is governed by moral or supernatural law rather than by natural causes. Then, by means of the conception of another life beyond death, he divorces judgments of good and evil from their natural objects. Good naturally means life-promoting, evil life-retarding ; but when life on earth is over-balanced by a far greater and more magnificent life to come, a life with conditions of its own, the priest is free to attach any value he pleases to ordinary human events ; if they do not promote life here, they may do so hereafter. A new scale of values is thus imposed on humanity and given a superhuman sanction. "In this way", says Nietzsche, "the famous 'conscience' is finally created : an inner voice which measures the value of every action not by its consequences but by its intention and the conformity of this intention to law."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Nietzsche continues, the "holy lie" of the priest invents (a) a God who punishes and rewards in strict accordance with the law-book of the priests, who are then regarded as his mouthpieces and accredited agents ; (b) a life beyond, during which the scale of rewards and punishments earned by moral or immoral conduct comes into force ; (c) a conscience, which speaks for God and the priest in the individual soul ; (d) a moral code the laws of which supersede ordinary causation ; and (e) faith, which is belief in the infallibility of the priestly dogmas, and which, substituted for truth, is made a condition of salvation and happiness here and hereafter. This, says Nietzsche, amounts to a "kind of castration of the seeking and forward-striving spirit" and it sets forth "the worst mutilation of man that can be imagined, as the 'good man'".

By means of unscrupulously made promises and threats — all in reality, Nietzsche contends, utterly void — the priest

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 141.

## THE IMMORALIST

brings the great mass of the community to his side. He appeals to the herd instinct against those strong ones who wish to stand apart from the group, to the resentment which the suffering and downtrodden feel against those who are fortunate and happy, and to the jealousy of the mediocre for the exceptional. And on this foundation of resentment and jealousy he builds up a powerful movement, which, developing with cruelty, falsity and narrow-mindedness, overwhelms men of the higher type.

All this, Nietzsche thinks, is most reprehensible : but it is only by resorting to such underhand tactics that morality and religion can impose themselves on the community.

But Nietzsche is not quite satisfied with this reply, although he makes lavish use of it. Its weakness, from the point of view of his philosophy, is that it is beside the point ; for any force which it has in practice rests on an appeal to the moral standards which Nietzsche, at other times, explicitly rejects. If we point out that our opponent is no better than we are, our argument may take away any fancied moral superiority on his part, but it does not make him morally inferior, still less does it make him inferior from an immoralist standpoint. A proof of the immorality of morality does not cancel the effectiveness of its use against us. And so Nietzsche finds he has to go further. He therefore asserts that these miserable, moral, superfluous ones are not really strong : they are weak.

The general position which he defends in this regard is that weakness gives rise to weakness, that the remedies which the sick man uses only increase his disease. Morality, Nietzsche insists, is essentially negative. It arises out of resentment against the code and behaviour of the privileged aristocratic class, and the fundamental principle of it is that of levelling, debasing, destroying all that is vital and good. The fundamental principle of the argument here is simple and may be briefly stated. The ultimate ideal of morality is an ascetic one, hostile to life. It springs, of course, from the will to power, and it finds its first field in its criticism of the aristocratic mode of life. But it is not merely a code by which the man of quality is condemned, it is also a code

## NIETZSCHE

by which the rabble have to govern their own conduct ; and so it turns against the " good man " himself, and the resentment and love of destruction on which morality is founded attack him also. His hatred and condemnation are thus applied to himself ; he becomes a miserable sinner, and develops a bad conscience. The priest, of course, enters here again as a consoler and helper — to establish his power all the more firmly. But he is in reality, Nietzsche maintains, no true physician ; at best he removes only symptoms and leaves the disease untouched. The consolations which he promises are unreal, and his prescriptions have an evil effect. He exploits the emotional sensitivity of his followers in a morbid way. " If anyone wants to say ", Nietzsche comments in *The Genealogy of Morals*, " that such a system of treatment has reformed man, I shall not contradict him ; but I shall add that for me ' reformed ' means just the same as ' tamed ', ' weakened ', ' discouraged ', ' refined ', ' coddled ', ' emasculated ' (hence almost the same as damaged). When, however, you have to deal in the main with the ill, the depressed, the oppressed, then such a system, even if it has made the ill man ' better ', under all circumstances makes him *more ill* ; just ask the mad doctors what a regular application of penance-torture, contrition and salvation-convulsions always brings with it."

This of course is the extreme form of religious morality, but according to Nietzsche it shows the principle of the whole in high relief. In turning the eyes of the individual to a world beyond, religion unfits him for the real world which is here, and projects all vitality and good out of the latter into an unreality. Moreover, Nietzsche maintains, the Heaven which is held up as a bait before the pious worshipper is not only an unreality, since there is no other world and no resurrection from the dead ; it is also an impossibility, a false ideal. It has the fatal defect of promising life without the conditions which make life possible, joy to those who could not feel it. Real happiness is possible, he maintains, only to sensitive beings who can also suffer pain. Indeed he goes further : the greater the happiness of which an

## THE IMMORALIST

individual is capable, the greater the pain that goes with it. And it is a false ideal which seeks happiness — or promises it — in a world from which pain and sorrow have been banished. But the ascetic ideal does make this promise ; hence in reality it is an ideal of sleep, of narcosis and death.

Now, in this there is a great deal of force, and it is a sound corrective to the constant tendency to abstraction which governs the human mind. In practical situations we are apt, not without practical justification, to aim at a limited objective and to frame an ideal which includes only those elements which we at present lack. In the sun we long for shade, in the shade we long for the sun. But if any such ideal were fixed and made eternal, we should find it unendurable. That is why so many Heavens and Utopias are so utterly dreary. After an eternity or two even the poorest of the elect might become weary of gazing at the sheen of the golden streets and the glitter of the pearly gates. But there is more than a suspicion of special pleading in Nietzsche's use of this contention. It is one thing to point out weaknesses in an ascetic ideal, and to emphasise the extravagances to which it leads : it is another to make good the allegation that the whole of the organised social world, below the *élite* aristocracy, is governed by such a code, and that the state, science, industry, the family, intercourse with one's neighbours, and the vast complex organisation of interests and inter-relationships within the community, depend upon any such contradictory and suicidal ideal. Nietzsche assured the world around him that it is governed by a principle hostile to life, and that it is weak. It did not believe him. It went on living, and it continued to be strong.

What was Nietzsche to do under these circumstances ? He did two things. He made a few tentative, unsystematic suggestions for reforming the world, then, appalled by the magnitude of the task, he fell into a passion and wrote *The Antichrist*. We may consider these activities separately.

Europe, from Nietzsche's point of view, was in a bad way. The equalitarian, levelling spirit of Christianity had spread through

## NIETZSCHE

the thought and institutions of the age. Science was infected with it ; democracy, anarchism and socialism were forms of it. These institutions and tendencies must be curbed or uprooted ; Nietzsche is at times not quite decided which alternative to take. Christianity is necessary, he thinks, for the mob, to keep it in order ; but socialism and anarchism — Nietzsche does not distinguish them with great precision — are dangerous, and their theories are hostile to the existence of any *élite* aristocracy. Probably they will have to be extirpated. Laws, however, and in general the rule of law, must be retained ; although the *élite* must be placed above the law.

How is this to be achieved ? Nietzsche is not clear on the point and puts forward divergent suggestions. It is obvious, however, that the change contemplated is a revolutionary one. The levelling process at work in Europe to-day must not be checked, he says, but rather accelerated, so that the proletariat may be prepared for its fate as a servile class. Distances between classes must be preserved — the phrase “ the pathos of distance ” has a strong attraction for him — and any intervening or mediating arrangements and classes must be removed. Nietzsche wishes to establish a caste system, but he wants at the same time to avoid a class war — at least on the part of the servile class. Universal suffrage, of course, must be abolished, for under it no great man can ever come to the top. “ The belittlement of man must be accepted as the sole aim for a long time ; because first of all a broad basis has to be created on which a stronger kind of man can stand.”<sup>1</sup> “ My thoughts ”, he says, “ do not turn on the degree of freedom to be granted to one, or to another, or to all, but on the degree of power which one or another is to exercise upon others or upon all ; in other words, how far a sacrifice of freedom, an enslavement itself, gives the basis for the production of a higher type. Put very crudely : How could one sacrifice the development of mankind to help into existence a higher species than man is ? ”<sup>2</sup> Along with the gradual degradation of the upstart rabble there must go the education of

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 890.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 859.

## THE IMMORALIST

the new *élite* class. How the candidates for this supreme position are to be selected is not stated, but they have to be trained and disciplined for their destiny. They must be taught by creative philosophers who will practise them in self-control, and accustom them to think of themselves guiltlessly and proudly as the creators of value, the ends for which society itself exists.

Nietzsche's conception of the true philosopher, the educator, is of interest here. The scheme put forward is not altogether that of Plato's philosopher king; and Nietzsche's general tendency is to set the philosopher beside the king in attendance on him as his guide and adviser, although at odd moments there also appears a wish to elevate the philosopher to the position of highest dignity, placing kings and rulers among his servants. Nietzsche's view probably varied with his self-confidence.

Here is the picture which we are given. "An educator does not say what he himself thinks; but only what he himself thinks about a matter in relation to the advantage of those whom he educates. He must not allow this dissimulation to be suspected; his character as master depends on the belief in his honesty. He must be competent in all the methods of nurture and discipline: he will be able to make some pupils progress only by the lashings of scorn, others, lazy, irresolute, cowardly, vain, perhaps by exaggerated praise. Such an educator is beyond good and evil, but no one is to be allowed to know it."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a touch of priestcraft here, and no strong aversion to the use of the "holy lie"!

But how is this differentiation of classes, and in particular the elevation of a new privileged caste above the servile population, to be made acceptable to the unprivileged group itself?

Nietzsche does not seem to have made up his mind finally on this point. At one time he advocates a gradual policy. Thus in one passage, after denouncing "the equality of rights" and "pity for all sufferers", he says that human growth has always occurred under hard conditions where these principles have no place.<sup>2</sup> The higher man must grow up under hard and oppressive

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 980.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 957.

## NIETZSCHE

circumstances where his powers of invention and dissimulation and lust for superiority will have full encouragement. "A morality which has such an opposite purpose [*i.e.* opposite to that of pity and equality], and which aims at raising man into the height instead of into comfort and mediocrity, a morality with the purpose of rearing a ruling caste — the lords of the earth — must, if the teaching of it is to be made possible, be introduced in linkage with the existing moral code and under the terminology and semblance of the latter. To this end many transitional and deceptive forms have to be fabricated . . . and above all a new type must be bred, in which duration through many generations will be guaranteed to the will and to the instincts required." In this new type the instincts which Christian morality and the usages of modern democratic society restrain, must be cautiously and gradually liberated and made to function again. Nietzsche looks for recruits, or at least supporters, in this enterprise to three sources: (a) "the pessimists of Europe, the poets and thinkers of an idealism in revolt, in so far as their dissatisfaction with existence in general has forced them, at least logically, to be dissatisfied with present-day man"; (b) "certain insatiably ambitious artists who fight unhesitatingly and unconditionally for the special rights of higher men and against the herd-animal, and by the seductive medicine of their art put to sleep all herd-instincts and herd-view in more select spirits"; and (c) a miscellaneous collection of critics and anti-democratic historians who find joy in the story of the Age of Discovery and in the spirit of the Renaissance.

Elsewhere, however, greater stress is laid on the conflict necessary before the new morality will be accepted. "A ruling race can arise only out of frightful and violent beginnings", we are told, and the problem is: "Where are the barbarians of the twentieth century? Obviously they will make themselves visible and consolidate themselves only after vast socialistic crises."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes Nietzsche is optimistic. Many see only signs of decadence, he comments, but his eye of faith discerns

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 868.



## THE IMMORALIST

a coming change — new barbarians, cynical and experimental conquerors, uniting intellectual superiority with overflowing power. New leaders are required — but they are almost in sight : men who will be ruthless in their methods and unyielding in their aims, men who will not shrink at the sight or thought of any suffering, however great, which they may inflict in establishing themselves in supremacy and carrying out their will. It is necessary, Nietzsche says, “ to acquire that vast *energy of greatness* in order through training, and on the other hand through the annihilation of millions of unsuccessful people, to shape the man of the future, and not to be overwhelmed by the suffering which one creates and the like of which has never existed before ”.<sup>1</sup>

At times Nietzsche speaks as if the new rulers of the world were to belong to an existing master race, suitable members of which require only to be selected and trained ; and in general the Aryan race is indicated, although not without an appreciation of the claims of the Jews, who constituted in Nietzsche’s opinion the strongest and most vital race in Europe, the cry against them — the Anti-Semitic movement — being the resentful snarling of underdogs who have failed to meet the challenge they offered. But in this connection, in spite of all his bitter criticism of the German, Nietzsche regarded him as potentially the highest type, applying the term “ blond beast ” to him as mark of appreciation of his barbaric character.

At other times, however, Nietzsche is discouraged, and looks away from all that exists. In *The Will to Power*, as in *Zarathustra*, he declares that “ not ‘ mankind ’ but the *Superman* is the goal ” ;<sup>2</sup> and he even doubts whether the goal can be reached. “ Would we be able to *foresee* the most favourable conditions under which beings of the highest value arise ! ”<sup>3</sup> he exclaims. “ It is a thousand times too complicated, and the probability of failure is *very great* : hence one feels no enthusiasm in striving after it.” We can, of course, fight against this scepticism and discouragement, but, he continues, in the main “ a wise utilisation of such con-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 964. Cf. Daniel xii, 1, and its echoes in the New Testament.

<sup>2</sup> *Will to Power*, § 1001.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 907.

## NIETZSCHE

ditions as chance creates presupposes *iron* men who have not yet lived. The first thing is to *make good* one's personal ideal and *realise* it. He who has grasped the nature of man and the origin of the highest of him, will shudder in the presence of him and take flight from all action. [This is] the result of inherited valuations."<sup>1</sup>

These inherited valuations which inhibited Nietzsche and prevented his ideal from being realised in the world around him, making it only a personal matter for a dweller in the wilderness, came, he believed, in the end from one source, from Christianity. It is Christianity which is the foe, Christianity in him and around him, in the ideals and institutions of modern society and in the impulses and desires of his own mind. This foe must be annihilated. Of course, others before him had undertaken this warfare, on the whole with small success. But they had used the wrong weapons,—logical criticism and ridicule are both too light to move its great mass. Something heavier is needed, some infusion of passion and power that will borrow strength and impetus from morality itself. Christianity must be shown to be not only false and ridiculous but also bad and foul. So Nietzsche set aside his old plan for *The Will to Power* and began it anew. In September 1888, in a fever of excitement and righteous indignation, he wrote *The Antichrist*.

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 908.

## XXIX

### THE ANTICHRIST

THE bulk of the content of *The Antichrist* is not new, but consists of ideas which Nietzsche had already written down for the first draft of *The Will to Power*; much of it therefore is already familiar to us. The conceptions of good and bad, interpreted as aristocratic and anti-aristocratic respectively and identified at the same time with life-furthering and life-destroying, the derivation of "morality" from disease and resentment, the glorification of the pagan world, and the elaborate scorn for the unprivileged rabble; these are the setting in which Christianity is now placed. Nor is the treatment of Christianity itself quite new, much of it being an elaboration of ideas already set forth elsewhere. What is new, however, is the concentration of Nietzsche's indignation on its object, and the prolonged fury of his attack.

It is perhaps worth noting that at the outset Nietzsche disclaims a moral standpoint. "I have drawn away the curtain from the corruption of man. This word, in my mouth, is preserved at least from one suspicion: that it involves a moral accusation against man. It is used — I wish to underline this again — free from moral significance: so much so that the corruption in question is felt most strongly by me where there has been most conscious aspiration hitherto towards 'virtue' and 'godliness'. I understand corruption, as will have been guessed, in the sense of *décadence*: my assertion is that all the values to which mankind now attaches the highest desirability are *décadence*-values."<sup>1</sup> The statement, however, is misleading, and is partly untrue. No real attempt is made to show that the features of Christianity that are denounced are invariably hostile to life; the assumption is made, of course, that they are

<sup>1</sup> *Antichrist*, § 6.

## NIETZSCHE

so, but it remains an assumption, the real basis of which is a strong prejudice and resentment against them. The implicit argument is : these things hamper me and offend against my code, therefore they are hostile to life. The judgment of value comes first, and the reason afterwards. Nietzsche's main purpose in affecting to avoid moral judgments is to give the appearance of impartiality and objectivity to what he says ; the appearance, however, is merely another mask, and in a wide sense his judgments are just as "moral" as those he condemns. But there is more than this. The code which Nietzsche applies is not a completely non-moral one. Terms like "corrupt" and "life-destroying" follow legitimately from his fundamental position, but he does not confine himself to these epithets or their synonyms. He is fond of the term "lie", using it profusely and recklessly ; but the activity it denotes is not necessarily anti-aristocratic, for he has already stated that when the great man "is not talking to himself, he has a mask. He prefers to lie rather than tell the truth : it takes more intelligence and will."<sup>1</sup> In fact, in his denunciation of lying, "holy" or otherwise, Nietzsche is merely acting under the impulse of vulgar moral prejudice. Terms like "fraud" obviously belong to the same class, and it seems clear that charges such as that of "cold-blooded cynicism" are moral rather than immoralist in nature. The truth is that he could not get away from moral conceptions, and without them his indignation loses its force.

A second feature worthy of notice is the confessedly uncritical treatment which he accords to the facts with which he is concerned. In attempting an interpretation of the mind of Christ he sets scientific method and research aside. After a patronising reference to Strauss, he says : "What have the contradictions of 'tradition' to do with me ! How can one call any of the legends of the saints 'tradition' ! The stories of the saints are the most ambiguous form of literature that there is anywhere : to apply scientific method to them, when no other original information is to be had, seems to me condemned from

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 962.

## THE ANTICHRIST

the start — mere learned idling.”<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche prefers to rely on intuition — psychology he calls it — and to draw portraits by freehand without too much control by a model. Even where there are documents, and a sober history can be attempted, e.g. in the account of the development of the religion of Israel, he prefers the same intuitive method to historical research. Unfortunately he had no strong historical sense. He could not readily transport himself into times and circumstances which were alien to him, nor understand the minds of other men unless they were akin to him. He could understand only what was to be found in himself, and when anything was presented which did not fall within that limited range, he modified it to make it more comprehensible to him. A great historian must have a strong dramatic sense : Nietzsche had only a weak one.

In considering Nietzsche's interpretation of Christianity we may begin with the pictures which he draws of Jesus and Paul. The general outlines were lightly sketched in *The Dawn of Day* and developed in *The Will to Power*. In *The Antichrist*, where the portraits are set forth most fully, a sharp distinction is drawn between the two figures, opposed attitudes and activities being attributed to them. Of course, they have something in common : both are opposed to the pagan, barbarian and aristocratic view which Nietzsche sets forth as his official doctrine. But they oppose it in different ways : in the one case by a self-sufficient calm, serenity and inward peace, in the other by a noisy and vindictive resentment. ‘To make a hero of Jesus !’ exclaims Nietzsche in scorn of Renan's conception. “If anything at all is unequivocal, it is the conception of the hero. What has become an instinct here is precisely the opposite of all contending, of all sense of being in a struggle : the incapability of resisting becomes morality here (‘resist not evil’ — the most profound word in the Gospels, in a sense the key to them), blessedness lies in peace, in gentleness, in the inability to be an enemy.”<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche's view here probably owes something to Strauss, who in discussing the nature of the religious consciousness of

<sup>1</sup> *Antichrist*, § 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 29.

## NIETZSCHE

Jesus, emphasises his cheerful and harmonious cast of mind, and accords to him a disposition for which the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man were not abstract theoretic principles but concrete felt realities. "To speak with the poet", says Strauss, "he had taken up the Godhead into his will, 'hence for him it had climbed from its world-throne, the abyss had been filled, the dread appearance had fled away'; in him man had passed from bondage to freedom. This cheerfulness, unbrokenness, this action from the pleasure and joy of a beautiful disposition, we may call the Hellenic element in Jesus." No doubt there were conflicts in the mind of Jesus, difficulties to be overcome, divergencies and mistakes to be made good; but there was no inner conflict, there were no crises in his development, nothing to leave a permanent scar in his soul and prevent steady development into harmony and peace. And Strauss contrasts Jesus with stormier and less happy natures, such as Paul, Augustine and Luther on whom inward conflict left a permanent mark.

Nietzsche begins from this point of view, but he goes beyond it, separating Jesus completely from all other Christians. It is important to realise what he is doing here. His own conception of the noble life, and of the good man, did not finally satisfy himself: it had two defects, it was largely unattainable for him, and it omitted much that was necessary to him. The will to power in its cruder and more direct manifestations was beyond his reach, not only by force of circumstance but also by reason of his inner temperament. It is one thing to approve as a matter of theory of the destruction of half the world by a triumphant hero, quite another to inflict suffering wantonly even on the weakest of living creatures. Nietzsche was capable of the former, but not of the latter. His life demanded, and largely attained, a courtesy and kindness which his theory scornfully rejected; and when for a moment he tried to act ruthlessly and strongly, he suffered — in defiance of his theory — agonies of remorse and regret. The peace and calm which his doctrine left out was an essential need of his nature. Again, in demanding a world of change and becoming, he did so in a one-sided fashion,

## THE ANTICHRIST

denying all permanence and unity and excluding them from reality — or professing to do so. But the eternal recurrence was an attempt to reinstate what he had rejected, and it was based on a conception of the conservation of the real elements of the universe which, if it had been carried out, would have destroyed utterly the Heraclitean conception with which it was connected. All the unity which Nietzsche tried to expel — the unity of the self and of the will — returns to him, for without it change itself is unintelligible and indeed impossible ; and it clamours for satisfaction and expression. Nietzsche's explicit theory has no satisfactory place for it ; but he makes room for it in the person of the Christ. Of course, he must treat it there as unreal and illusory, and so he describes the original Gospel as a "flight from reality", and attributes it to weakness. "We know", he says, "a state of morbid sensitivity of the sense of touch, which draws back shuddering from every contact, from every grasping of a firm object. Translate this physiological *habitus* into its final logic — an instinctive hatred of *every* reality, a flight into the intangible, into the inconceivable, a repulsion from everything formal, all notion of time and space, from everything established — customs, institutions, the church, into a sense of being at home in a world where no kind of reality stirs any more, a purely 'inner world', 'a true world', an 'eternal world . . .' 'The Kingdom of God is within you.'"<sup>1</sup>

It is not another world that is in question here, a world beyond : that Nietzsche rejects, and he makes Jesus reject it too. What the Gospel offers is an inward, real, true, eternal world here and now ; and it was in such a world that Jesus lived.

Nietzsche goes on to attribute to Jesus other ideas which also made a deep appeal to him. Jesus, he thinks, was free from a sense of sin and punishment and neither thought nor spoke of rewards. "'Sin', every form of distance between God and man, is abolished — precisely this is the 'glad tidings'. Blessedness is not promised, it is not bound to conditions : it is the *sole* reality — the rest consists of symbols for the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> *Antichrist*, § 29.

## NIETZSCHE

speaking about it.”<sup>1</sup> The original Gospel, as preached by Jesus, Nietzsche contends, had nothing to do with immortality. “ ‘The Kingdom of Heaven’ is a state of heart — not something to come ‘beyond the world’ or ‘after death’. The whole conception of natural death is *lacking* in the Gospel : death is not a bridge, or transition, it is lacking because it belongs to a quite different, purely apparent, world, useful only as a symbol. The ‘hour of death’ is *not* a Christian idea — hours, time, physical life and its crises, do not exist at all for the teacher of the ‘glad tidings’. The ‘Kingdom of God’ is not something to be awaited : it has no yesterday and no day after to-morrow — it is an experience in a heart ; it exists everywhere, it exists nowhere. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

What Jesus taught was a way of life, not a doctrine, much less a “faith”. Christianity, in him, was a peace and harmony of soul, a unity with God and man, which carried with it a sense of final reality.

Of course, Nietzsche cannot accept such a view. Nevertheless it contains a part of himself, a part neglected in his conscious theory ; and so he sets it aside, not with scorn and anger, but with care and respect. It is the peace, the unattainable peace, of a noble soul, the harmony he would like to have had, if only harmony had been a possibility for him.

But Christ died on the cross, and with him Christianity itself died ; he was the only Christian. What followed him was a reversal and denial of his spirit, a new Gospel, a gospel of resentment and revenge. “It is false to the point of madness, to see in ‘faith’, in particular in the faith in salvation through Christ, the badge of the Christian : only the Christian *practice*, a life such as that of him who died on the cross, is Christian.” But the change from a way of life to a faith was quickly made, and the chief agent, in Nietzsche’s eyes, both of the transformation of Christianity and of its propagation in its new form, was the apostle Paul. Of course, Paul did not begin the process. The small group of disciples, after the death of their master, turned

<sup>1</sup> *Antichrist*, § 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 34.



## THE ANTICHRIST

in revolt against those who had put him to death, against Judaism, and in particular against its ruling class ; and they began to interpret Jesus as if he too had been in revolt against the existing order. " Until then this warlike, this Nay-saying, Nay-doing feature had been lacking in the image of him."<sup>1</sup> The disciples proceeded to add it, and to turn the Gospel into a doctrine of resentment and revenge. They read their own bitterness against the Pharisees and theologians into the character of their master ; they elevated him infinitely above all men, just as the Jews themselves had lifted their national image, Jahwe, beyond human relationship and placed him at a great height. " The one God and the only Son of God," says Nietzsche ; " both were products of *ressentiment*. . . ."

The work of Jesus was undone. He had denied the very conception of guilt, says Nietzsche, and closed the gap between God and man. His disciples and the Church re-established and extended the conception and consciousness of guilt, denying the unity which was the essence of the message of Jesus. The doctrines of the second coming and the judgment were soon invented ; the doctrine of the death of the Christ as an atoning sacrifice and the doctrine of the resurrection, which makes nonsense of the blessedness which Jesus preached, were substituted for the true Gospel ; and in place of real attainable blessedness in this life there were promised imaginary rewards and penalties in an unreal world to come.

Nietzsche cannot restrain his anger at the change, and he pours out his indignation on the head of the apostle Paul, whom he regards as the chief agent of it. Nor is it difficult to understand the source of his resentment. " We preach Christ crucified," said Paul, " unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. . . . Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called ; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 40.

## NIETZSCHE

are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : that no flesh should glory in his presence." To Nietzsche's ears this is blasphemy, the denial of all that is good, valiant and true ; and the gravest feature of it is that it is not a mere boast in Paul's mouth but a confident statement of fact, a statement of something which had been increasingly realised, largely through Paul's own influence. And so Nietzsche attacks him. " On the heels of the ' glad tidings ' followed the worst of all : that of Paul. In Paul there was embodied the type opposite to the ' glad tidings ', the genius in hatred, in the vision of hatred, in the relentless logic of hatred. How much this dysangelist has sacrificed to hatred ! Above all the redeemer : he nailed him to *his* cross. The life, the example, the teaching, the death, the meaning and the law of the whole Gospel—none of it was left, after that counterfeiter in hatred had taken all he could use. *Not* reality, *not* historical truth."<sup>1</sup>

The point of importance for us here is not the change which took place after the death of Jesus, whereby the original Gospel grew into a Christology, but the motive which Nietzsche alleges for that change, the motive of resentment and hatred. The movement instituted by Jesus, if it had remained true to itself, would soon have died away, and the very memory of the little Jewish sect would have perished. But Paul transformed it, linked it up with the subterranean fertility religions of the Semitic world, and offered it as a fuller satisfaction of the baser passions of man than could be given by Mithras, or Osiris, or any of their kindred.

The charge made against Paul is also hurled at the early Christians : hatred and conscious deceit. " We have read the Gospel as a book of innocence. . . ." Nietzsche exclaims, " no small indication of the mastercraft with which the show has been staged.—Of course, if we were to see, even in passing, all these queer hypocrites and bogus saints, that would be an end of it — and just because I cannot read a word without their gestures,

<sup>1</sup> *Antichrist*, § 42.

## THE ANTICHRIST

*I make an end of them.* . . . I cannot stand the way they have of turning up their eyes. . . . 'Judge not!' they say, but they send everyone to hell, who stands in their way. In making God judge, they themselves judge; in glorifying God, they glorify themselves. . . . Forced in accordance with their cringing nature to sneak about, to stay in corners, and live shadow-like in the shadow without any concern for the future, they make a virtue of it: out of duty their life appears as humility, as humility it is another proof of their piety. Oh, this humble, chaste, compassionate kind of fraud! 'Virtue itself will bear witness for us.' . . . Morality is the best way of leading mankind by the nose."<sup>1</sup> Looking at the picture he has conjured up, Nietzsche cannot find terms too strong for his dislike—"the most fatal sort of megalomania the world has ever seen", "little abortions of hypocrites and liars", "little superlative Jews ripe for every kind of madhouse". Nor are the epithets the outburst of a single moment of passion, for the same picture is presented, with a similar colouring, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, published three years before. Nietzsche leaves one in no doubt about his feelings.

Of course his account is not history. Not only does it refrain from a careful scrutiny of all the evidence, choosing capriciously here and there in accordance with preconceived ideas; it even fails to present figures with psychological verisimilitude. It is hard to believe that such an innocent, happy Jesus would have been put to death as a mortal enemy by the combined power of Judah and Rome; or that such a cynical, malicious, vindictive Paul could have converted the pagan world to a religion of love. It is true that there is some history in it, but that history had been presented by others. Thus, to take only one example, Jowett pointed out, some thirty years before Nietzsche did, how distasteful the early Christian community would have appeared to the respectable Church members of his own day. "Not Paul standing on Mars' Hill in the fullness of manly strength, as we have him in the cartoon of Raphael is the true image,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 44.

## NIETZSCHE

but such a one as he himself would glory in, whose bodily presence was weak and speech feeble, who had an infirmity in his flesh, and bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus." But Jowett had no contempt for these rude uneducated Christians, and would never have dreamed of attributing their strength and conquest to anything but positive strength itself. Nietzsche's achievement is to read the whole strange story in the light of one emotion and one motive, resentment and revenge. And where does this interpretation come from? Surely from Nietzsche's own personal experience. He is taking revenge on the good and pious, on Naumburg, and all the restraints for which these stand; he is even avenging himself on Christianity for the disappointment it causes him through its failure to be true. And the resentment he feels is projected into the object of it; the feeling felt for the Christian is attributed to the Christian himself.

We have seen that Nietzsche was not made for a life of combat with living men, and the sallies he made led to quick repentance. And so to the figure of his happy warrior he added that of the lonely Christ, starved for love and understanding, but nevertheless at peace with God and man. But he was also quick to take offence, and the resentment which he so bitterly rued, sprang up as a quick, though not lasting growth again and again in his long struggle in an alien environment, where he had to move through by-paths and in disguise. He has drawn the picture for us himself. "How poisonous, how crafty, how bad one is made by every long war, which cannot be waged by open violence! How *personal* one is made by a long fear, a long watching of enemies and possible enemies! These rejects of society, these long persecuted, evilly hunted ones — also the enforced recluses, the Spinozas and Giordano Brunos — always themselves become in the end, even under the most intellectual masquerade, and perhaps without knowing it, refined vengeance seekers and poison mixers . . . not to mention the stupidity of moral indignation, which is an infallible sign in a philosopher that philosophic humour has taken leave of him."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 25.

## THE ANTICHRIST

The conflicting elements of his mind and temperament, which in his actual life he could neither rid himself of nor bring into harmony, Nietzsche separated from one another in his theory and set over against one another. But they have a common home and origin. The conquering barbarian, the noble aristocrat, the melancholy recluse, the gentle and happy Jesus, the weak and vengeful Christian ; they are all Nietzsche, parts of his complex nature, divided fragments of his personality.

There is one further point in *The Antichrist* with which we must deal briefly. The transition from Jesus to Paul is merely a dramatic moment in the conversion of Judaism into Christianity. Nietzsche's attitude to the Jew is, as we have seen, an ambiguous one ; but in *The Antichrist* he tries to simplify it, although not with complete success. The original Jew with his fierce, anthropomorphic, national God Nietzsche found worthy of respect. But when the kingdom of Israel fell, Jahwe lost his old functions and became the God of a people in distress and captivity. Then the priest took control, and re-made God in his own image. The virtues of a free and independent race of men were given up, and the tricks which serve the oppressed were brought into the foreground and commended. This attitude, however, was a disguise. The Jews as a race were not, and are not, decadent ; and the moral appearance which they assumed was a cunning device to mislead people and gain their support. "The Jews are the opposite of all *décadents*", says Nietzsche ; "they have been forced to make a display to the point of illusion, they have succeeded, with a *non plus ultra* of histrionic genius, in placing themselves at the head of all *décadence* movements (— as for example, the Christianity of Paul —), in order to make out of them something stronger than any party which says Yes to life. To the sort of man who seeks power under Judaism or Christianity, the priestly sort, *décadence* is only a means."<sup>1</sup>

The argument is not quite clear. Nietzsche seems to assert both that the whole Jewish race is sound, merely pretending to be decadent in order to mislead others, and also that the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> *Antichrist*, § 24.

## NIETZSCHE

leaders mislead the Jews themselves, who are therefore corrupted by their own moral code. Nietzsche wants to have it both ways : indeed he must have it so, for he can deny neither the virility and toughness of Israel, nor the " moral " character of its religion.

Christianity, in its original form, Nietzsche describes as a revolt against Judaism itself, carried out in its own spirit : it is Judaism carried to its logical conclusion. As Israel turned from the ordinances and institutions of the Gentiles, so Jesus turned from those of Israel itself, denying the last vestiges of organisation and class distinction which the Jew retained, Pharisaism and the priesthood. In him, Judaism committed suicide. In Paul, however, it revived ; and Christianity is just the development and intensification of it ; the Christian, says Nietzsche, is a threefold Jew. In accordance with this line of thought, Nietzsche maintains that behind the Christian façade there hide the grosser passions which Christianity would renounce, the brutality, the self-seeking, which the Gospel disclaims.

In setting this view forth, Nietzsche is assisted by his own inability to put himself genuinely at another person's point of view, or to understand how beliefs differing from his own can genuinely be held. What he himself cannot believe, the Christian cannot believe ; the Christian creed must therefore be a conscious lie. Forgetting that he has charged the Jews with insincerity, Nietzsche says that he is willing to overlook the crudities of belief of earlier days, for men did not then know any better and fell through ignorance into many delusions and insane beliefs ; but to-day we do know better. " What formerly was merely sickly, had to-day become indecent — it is indecent to be a Christian to-day. . . . Even those who make the most modest claim to uprightness *must* know to-day that a theologian, a priest, a pope not only errs with every statement he makes, but *lies*."¹ This is not the ancient and ever new charge that the Christian does not live up to his profession, although Nietzsche adds that too for good measure ; it is something deeper. The

¹ *Antichrist*, § 38.

## THE ANTICHRIST

profession itself, the Christian creed, is alleged to be a conscious lie.

But Nietzsche is not content yet. He goes back to the times of darkness and withdraws the excuse he formerly made for them. The early Christian too is a liar, intrinsically and without remedy. "Every word from the mouth of an 'early Christian' is a lie, every action he performs is dishonest by instinct,—all his values, all his ends are harmful, but *whoever* he hates, *whatever* he hates, that *has value*. . . . The Christian, the Christian priest in particular, is a criterion of values."<sup>1</sup>

When Nietzsche looks at the world in this way he becomes enraged. He sees the steady rise and conquest of the views he has come to hate, and in his indignation he falsifies history to make his enemy more dreadful and fiendish. When Rome was at the height of its glory, Jesus was born; and Christianity, Nietzsche avers, destroyed Rome. The ancient world was not corrupt, it did not fall of its own weakness; it was brought low by the insidious underhand attack of Pauline Christianity. "These stealthy worms which crept up in night, mist, and duplicity to every individual, and sucked out of him serious interest in *true* things and all instinct for reality, this cowardly, effeminate sugar-sweet gang alienated bit by bit the 'souls' from that immense structure",<sup>2</sup> the Roman Empire, and by foul propaganda turned all the strength of the ancient world against it; so that it fell. Christianity destroyed it, Nietzsche tells us, "overnight".

The harvest of the civilisation of the Mohammedan world was also destroyed in the same way, and when the spirit of antiquity was reborn at the Renaissance, Christianity, in its German form, smothered it in its cradle. Nietzsche dislikes, even hates, the Reformation—because it was effective. The Church had become effete and evil; and Nietzsche chuckles with joy at the thought that Cesare Borgia might have been made Pope. That would have been the death of Christianity, and the free, gallant, pagan world would have come to full life

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 58.

## NIETZSCHE

again. But Luther revived Christianity; and if the world should never get rid of that incubus, Luther and the Germans are to be held responsible.

But Nietzsche will not give up hope. So he stands up against Christianity and hurls his accusation at it. "I condemn Christianity, I bring against the Christian Church the most dreadful of all charges that an accuser ever took into his mouth. It is to me the highest of all imaginable corruptions, its will is to effect every final possible corruption. . . . I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great inner depravity, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means is poisonous, secret, subterranean, petty enough,—I call it the one immortal blot on mankind. . . ." Then, as if confident that his attack will succeed, he calls out: "And time is reckoned from the *dies nefastus* when this fatality came into being,—from the *first* day of Christendom:—*why not rather from its last?*—*From to-day?*—The transvaluation of all values! . . ."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Antichrist*, § 62.



## ANTI-WAGNER

IN considering Nietzsche's attempt to found a complete philosophy of life upon the will to power, we have so far left one feature out of account, viz. his treatment of beauty and of art. In the consideration of it a personal problem arises — his relation to Wagner.

We have already seen that when the first fervour of worship died away Nietzsche began to take up a critical attitude to his hero, and when the Wagners left Tribschen for Bayreuth, he ceased to be spiritually at home with them. In 1874 he wrote down his private thoughts in this connection in a spirit far removed from idolatry, and although in the *Untimely Consideration*, *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, which followed soon after, he did not express himself so freely as he had done in secret, for those who could read between the lines there were signs of discord and revolt. In 1876, when Wagner's cause had surmounted its difficulties and was enjoying its first triumph, Nietzsche deserted it, fleeing from Bayreuth to the shaded recesses of the Fichtel Mountains. Two years later he made the breach irrevocable by the publication of *Human all too Human*, and he widened it as the years went on by a steady undercurrent of criticism, which was never far from the surface in any of the books he wrote. Wagner died in February 1883, and when Nietzsche received the news he expressed himself naïvely in the true spirit of an immoralist — although a sickly one. To Peter Gast he wrote as follows: "For some days I was *seriously* ill and caused my landlady anxiety. I am now better again, and I really believe that the death of Wagner was the greatest relief that could have been afforded to me at present. It was hard to have to be an opponent for six years of the man one had most revered, and

## NIETZSCHE

I am not coarsely enough built *for that*. In the end it was the senile Wagner that I had to resist ; as for the real Wagner, I still do wish to become in large part his *heir* (as I have often told Malwida). Last summer I realised that he had taken away from me all the people in Germany on whom sense could have any effect at all, and begun to draw them away into the confused, desolate enmity of his old age."

But with the disappearance of his antagonist Nietzsche did not cease the warfare against him, and the references in *Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Genealogy of Morals* and *The Will to Power* are increasingly personal and venomous. In the spring of 1888 he threw his ideas on Wagner into a pamphlet, *The Case of Wagner*, supplementing it by two postscripts and an epilogue ; then, not fully satisfied, he ran through his old writings, and at the end of the year selected from them the parts which told most strongly against Wagner, and with considerable editorial change and addition, combined them into a final statement of his case : *Nietzsche contra Wagner*. The preface was completed on Christmas Day ; it was the last thing he wrote.

Neither of these writings contains much that is new about Wagner as an artist, but they throw some light upon Nietzsche himself, on what he demanded from art, on his temperament and on his methods of controversy. We may take the last point first. The argument throughout consists of special pleading ; that perhaps was to be expected. But in its eagerness to discredit Wagner it bespatters him with mud. Thus, to take the most glaring instance, when Nietzsche was anxiously trying to rally to his aid the reluctance Germany had shown in accepting the new music, he asked abruptly in a footnote : " Was Wagner a German at all ? . . . His father was an actor called Geyer. A vulture [Geier] is almost an eagle." <sup>1</sup> And the insinuation, made explicit elsewhere, is that Wagner was illegitimate, and had Jewish blood in him. Ink has been spilt in discussing the point, but the main considerations are simple. Wagner was a small boy when his father died, and his mother married again,

<sup>1</sup> *Der Fall Wagner*, Nachschrift.

## ANTI-WAGNER

her second husband being the actor Geyer, mentioned by Nietzsche. Wagner was fond of his stepfather, and for some time, probably for the sake of convenience, passed under his name at school. But there is no reason to believe that Wagner's mother was unfaithful to her first husband while he lived, and he seems to have had no doubt about the paternity of his son. If either Wagner's mother or his stepfather had any such doubt — it could hardly be more — neither was likely to have told the boy. If Wagner had no knowledge that he was illegitimate, Nietzsche had none either ; and the introduction of the charge five years after Wagner's death, savours of a plebeian rather than an aristocratic method of warfare.

Why was Nietzsche's attack on Wagner so fierce, so prolonged and so personal ? Of course the strong attraction that Wagner had exercised, and continued to exercise on him, was behind it ; but why was the opposition so tense and so bitter ? What was at the root of the difference ?

The reply to this question is complex : several elements were involved. We may begin with those that are most directly personal.

Between the two men, as we have already seen, there was a marked difference of temperament ; and it was such that each put considerable strain on the other. Wagner's magnificent egoism required in others a mobile subserviency that Nietzsche could not give ; and at times the rigidity and formalism which Nietzsche had difficulty in shaking off, must have irritated Wagner. The two men were bound to get on one another's nerves occasionally ; and Nietzsche seldom, if ever, recovered from experiences of that kind.

But such differences, though they lead to misunderstanding and friction in ordinary intercourse, need not give rise to lasting animosity. For that more is required ; and in Nietzsche's case there was the complicating factor of jealousy — the common, vulgar, unaristocratic envy and resentment that the unsuccessful feel for their more successful rivals. It does not explain the whole situation, of course, but it must not be overlooked or

## NIETZSCHE

treated as unimportant. Wagner would not give way to Nietzsche, nor take prescriptions for life and art from him ; yet after a long struggle he achieved astounding success, and drew after him, not the mere foolish rabble, as Nietzsche at times professed to believe, but the *élite* themselves, the intellectual and artistic public of Germany, France and Russia. Bayreuth even claimed to display "a parterre of kings". Nietzsche's own friends were involved ; Gersdorff, Rohde, Miss von Meysenbug, Lou Salomé, von Stein, even Nietzsche's own sister ; they could hardly be persuaded to abandon the old magician and follow the new leader. We have already noted the discontent which this aroused, displaying itself in Nietzsche's refusal to go to Bayreuth, unless Wagner himself personally invited him and treated him as the honoured guest. On these terms, apparently, he was prepared to go ; for his objection to *Parsifal* was not insuperable, and could also have been overcome by the opportunity to whisper nothings into Lou Salomé's ear. But Wagner did not make an amende for the offence Nietzsche had committed, and so the jealousy grew, finding relief in the vigorous bluntness of Nietzsche's account of the audiences at Bayreuth, and in general in his scorn of Wagner's followers. "We know the masses," says Nietzsche, "we know the theatre. The best who sit in it, German youth, horned Siegfrieds and other Wagnerians, in need of the sublime, the profound, the overpowering. . . . And the others who also sit there, the cretins of culture, the bored little ones, the eternally feminine, the happy digesters, in short, the people ; also in need of the sublime, the profound, the overpowering."<sup>1</sup>

But more than jealousy of Wagner's success was involved. As we have seen, Nietzsche never fully overcame the difficulties which are apt to afflict the youth passing from boyhood to manhood, from tutelage to freedom, and traces of the negative attitude peculiar to that phase of development remained with him to the end. His one-sided assertion of independence and self-sufficiency made it difficult, if not impossible, for him to take

<sup>1</sup> *Der Fall Wagner*, § 6.

## ANTI-WAGNER

up the posture of a follower ; and as he was not in a position to make good in the eyes of the world his claim to an equal sovereignty, he was led inevitably to oppose and attack what stood beyond him and overshadowed him. And he attacked Wagner as he attacked Christianity and the moralists and philosophers and political leaders of the modern world, not only because he disagreed with him, but also because by the public, learned and unlearned alike, Wagner was accorded sovereignty. Nietzsche could not be a brother king, so he became a rebel ; he was an adolescent of genius.

To these broad temperamental factors we must add another, viz. the state of Nietzsche's health : for his attitude to art was influenced by his physical condition. His first criticism of Wagner was written in 1875, when he was a convalescent at Steinabad in the Black Forest. And in the early summer of 1881, when he was again convalescent from a long attack of ill-health and depression, he found that his taste in music had changed. In *Ecce Homo* he speaks of this change as presaging the coming some two months later of the idea of the eternal recurrence and also the birth of *Zarathustra*, which followed not long after. " In Recoaro, a small mountain resort, where I spent the spring of the year 1881, I discovered, together with my maestro and friend Peter Gast, also a ' twice-born ', that the Phoenix music was flying above us with lighter and brighter plumage than it had ever worn before."<sup>1</sup> On the purely musical side the change manifested itself most clearly towards the end of the year, when he heard *Carmen* for the first time. His enthusiasm for this opera was so great that when he wrote *The Case of Wagner* seven years later, he boasted that he had attended twenty performances of it. And in the intervening period his letters were full of praise for it and its composer, a praise in no way diminished when he heard of Wagner's opposition. In September 1888 he told Peter Gast that Gersdorff had witnessed " a wild outburst of mad rage by Wagner against Bizet ". Nietzsche professed to be edified by this, remarking that as Wagner had taken sides here

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 247.

## NIETZSCHE

also, he himself would deal with him more maliciously — presumably in *The Case of Wagner*.

In order to understand what Nietzsche obtained from *Carmen* we may consider the qualities he attributed to it, and the demands he made from music in general. Bizet's orchestration, he says, is perfect. In contrast with it that of Wagner is called brutal, artificial and at the same time "innocent". He dubs it the Sirocco. Bizet's music advances lightly, lithely, with urbanity. It is lovable and, unlike Wagner's, does not sweat. "What is good is light, everything divine runs on sensitive feet." That, Nietzsche says, is a first principle of his artistic creed. "Bizet's music is wicked, refined, fatalistic. . . . It is rich. It is precise. It builds, organises, is rounded off." The opera itself is tragic, but it achieves its effect "without grimaces. Without counterfeiting. Without the *lie* of the grand style." It leaves much to the understanding of the hearer, and does not insist on its points and reiterate them mercilessly as Wagner does. Bizet's music, Nietzsche says, makes the spirit free and gives thought wings.

Nevertheless it is logical and its drama is governed by sheer necessity. The whole climate, music and action, is southern, with a clearer air and warmer sun than is to be found in Europe. It is sensuous, but not in a French or German manner; "its gaiety is African; destiny is over it, its happiness is short, sudden, and irretrievable. . . . How delicious the golden afternoons of its happiness are to us! In them we look out: did we ever find the sea smoother? And in what a satisfying way the Moorish dance speaks to us! How even our insatiability for once finds satiety in its lascivious melancholy! Lastly love, love translated back into nature. Not the love of a 'higher' young lady! No Senta-sentimentality! But love as fate, as fatality, cynical, innocent, cruel — and just in that way *nature*! The love which in its means is war, in its ground the deadly hatred of the sexes!"

In *Ecce Homo* we find a briefer statement of much the same view. "I shall now say a word for select ears. What I really want from music. That it should be cheerful and profound, like

## ANTI-WAGNER

a midday in October. That it should be something apart, wildly wanton, tender, a sweet little woman, of baseness and charm.”<sup>1</sup>

Some of this is obvious, and Nietzsche's preference for the Carmens of the stage — there is no reason to believe that he sought them elsewhere — over the higher young ladies of culture whom he met in real life, need not detain us. What is more relevant at present is his insistence on the need in music for dry, unclouded, sunny weather and for lightness, grace, liteness, and the sensitive foot of the dancer. The sun, Nietzsche believed, brought him relative health ; the clouds and rain of the North, illness and depression. Thus his demand that music should be charged with the feeling of a warmer sun than he had ever experienced, an African sun, is intelligible. Nor is the other demand difficult to understand, the demand for lightness, grace, ease, and swiftness of movement. Nietzsche is trying to get away from himself, from the depression of his illness ; he is a convalescent unable to withstand cold and mist, oppressed even by the weight of his body, and unable to bear any nervous strain. He tells us in a preface, written in 1886 to the second edition of *Human all too Human*, that the convalescent loves to lie basking in the sun like a lizard, and we have seen how he insists in *Zarathustra* and *The Will to Power* on the importance of lightness of feet that can dance.

Music had to provide these things for him, and it is important to realise how urgent his need was. In January 1888 he wrote to Peter Gast that life had never seemed to him so difficult. “There are nights when in complete discouragement I can no longer hold out. Nevertheless : there is so much still to be done (indeed everything ! —). Consequently one does hold out. And I maintain this ‘wisdom’ at least through the morning.

Music gives me sensations which I have never really had before. It frees me from myself, it gives me a sober view of myself, as if my vision and feeling were raised far above me ; thus it strengthens me, and after every evening of music (I have heard *Carmen* four times) there comes a morning full of resolute

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xxi, p. 204.

## NIETZSCHE

inspirations and flashes of insight. That is very wonderful. It is as if I had bathed in a more natural element. Life without music is a mistake, a hardship, an exile."

Wagner, on the other hand, did not provide the tonic which Nietzsche demanded ; he is exhausting and debilitating. "My objections to Wagner's music", he wrote in *The Joyful Wisdom*, "are physiological objections : why should I begin by disguising them under aesthetic formulæ ? My 'fact' is that I can no longer breathe easily when this music begins to act on me : that my foot immediately becomes wicked and revolts — it needs time, dance, march, it seeks from music primarily the ecstasies which lie in *good* walking, pacing, leaping, dancing.— But do not even my stomach, my heart, my circulation, my intestines protest ? Am I not made hoarse by it ? — And thus I ask myself what my whole body really *wants* from music. I believe, relief for itself : as if all the animal functions ought to be accelerated by light, bold, unrestrained, self-assured rhythms, as if brazen, leaden life should be gilded by golden, good, tender harmonies. My melancholy would fain rest in the hiding-places and abysses of *perfection* : for this I need music. What has the drama to do with me !"<sup>1</sup> And so when a heartless jade with swaying limbs and nimble feet has to be killed by her tormented lover, let it be done to the rhythm and melody of light opera.

Nietzsche knew and confessed that as a musician Bizet could not compete with Wagner. Wagner stood alone, without a rival in his own times. He was too strong, not too weak ; and he overpowered Nietzsche, grasped him, held him, and left his soul storm-tossed and exhausted. Nietzsche confessed that he could not bear even the bustle of life and "the coarse, hollow-sounding, darkly coloured enjoyment" of ordinary people. "How that histrionic cry of passion now distresses our ears," he complains at the end of *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, "how foreign to our ears has become the whole romantic uproar and sensuous confusion which the cultured mob loves, with all its aspirations towards the sublime, the exalted, the distorted ! No, if we

<sup>1</sup> *Joyful Wisdom*, § 368.



convalescents still need an art, it is a *different* art — a modicum, light, volatile, divinely undisturbed, divinely ingenuous art, which blazes up like a pure flame into an unclouded sky. Above all : an art for artists, *only for artists*."

To the objections derived from these considerations Nietzsche adds others of a more directly musical nature, generally repeating criticisms already formulated in 1874. Thus the accusation is brought again that Wagner is only an artist in miniature, and that he has devoted all his skill to perfecting the elements of his music at the expense of the larger unities and the whole. The endless melody may have perfect syllables, and good words ; but the sentences, and still more the paragraphs, are untidy and even meaningless. Too much attention is given to individual local effects, and too little to the coherence and development of the whole. Wagner, says Nietzsche, " was not the ' defective ', ' unfortunate ', ' contradictory ' genius he has been called. . . . Wagner was something *perfect*, a typical *decadent*, in whom every ' free will ' was lacking, every feature was necessary. If there is anything at all interesting in Wagner it is the logic with which a physiological defect marches, conclusion by conclusion, step by step, along with practice and procedure, innovation in principles, crisis in taste."<sup>1</sup> The faults of the decadent style, Nietzsche continues, are fundamentally identical in music and literature, in Wagner and Victor Hugo. Their essence is " that life no longer dwells in the whole. The word becomes sovereign and leaps out of the sentence, the sentence encroaches and darkens the sense of the page, the page gains life at the expense of the whole — the whole is no longer a whole. But that is the picture of every decadent style : every time anarchy of the atoms, disaggregation of the will, in moral language, ' freedom of the individual ' — elaborated into a political theory of ' equal rights for all '. Life, *equal* vitality, the vibration and exuberance of life driven back into the smallest forms, the rest *poor* in life. Everywhere paralysis, trouble, numbness or enmity and chaos : both leap evermore to the eye as one ascends in the forms of organisa-

<sup>1</sup> *Der Fall Wagner*, § 7.

tion. The whole is no longer in any way alive : it is put together, calculated, artificial, an artefact." Nietzsche asks for a rigid and conventional structure, and for something firm under his feet, so that he may walk or dance on it ; Wagner plunges him into the sea and forces him to swim.

The subordinating of music to drama and the attempt to unify the arts from the point of view of the stage, are also criticised again : but little or nothing is added to the cogency of the earlier statements, and we need not reconsider the argument here.

The artistic objections, however, which Nietzsche brings against Wagner are linked up with religious and philosophic criticism, of the type with which we are now familiar. The decadent style is the reflex of the decadent doctrine. " I put this point of view in the forefront ", says Nietzsche : " Wagner's art is ill. The problems which he brings on to the stage — purely hysterical problems —, the convulsions of his emotions, his over-excited sensibility, his taste, which longs for ever sharper spices, his instability, which he dresses up as a principle, not least the choice of the heroes and heroines, regarded as physiological types (a gallery of invalids ! —) : all together it presents a picture of illness, there is no doubt of that. *Wagner est une névrose.*"<sup>1</sup> " Wagner is a misleader in the grand style. There is nothing weary, nothing outlived, nothing dangerous to life and slanderous to the world in the things of the spirit, which has not secretly been taken under the protection of his art — he conceals the blackest obscurantism under the garment of the ideal. . . . Everything that has ever grown on the soil of impoverished life, the whole counterfeit coinage of transcendence and the Beyond, have their most sublime advocate in Wagner's art — not in formulae : Wagner is too clever for that — but in the persuasion of the senses, which for their part make the spirit soft and tired." <sup>2</sup>

" Oh, this old robber ! He robs us of our youths, he robs us even of our women and drags them to his cave. . . . Oh, this old Minotaur ! What he has already cost us ! Every year

<sup>1</sup> *Der Fall Wagner*, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Nachschrift.

## ANTI-WAGNER

trains of the fairest maidens and youths are led into his labyrinth, that he may swallow them — every year all Europe chants, ‘ On to Crete ! On to Crete ! ’ ”

Passing now from the criticism of Wagner, we may glance at the conception of art which lies behind it and which is stated more explicitly — although still disjointedly and in a series of miniatures — in *The Will to Power*. Nietzsche looks back, mainly with approval, to *The Birth of Tragedy*, published more than sixteen years before. It was a book, he now thinks, with a terrible message : the real world is “ false, cruel, contradictory, misleading, senseless ”. We have to rise superior to it in order to live in it, we have to falsify it, transform it ; and this can only be done adequately by art. In the main there are two ways of doing this, the Apollonian and the Dionysian : the one leading compellingly to vision, as in dreams, the other to orgiastic ecstasy, as in drunkenness. By these means man is reconciled to life, and he overcomes its pain by willing it ecstatically. As Nietzsche thinks over his problem, however, the Apollonian state fades into the background ; and in the final period with which we are now concerned, the solace of art is found mainly in connection with the Dionysian rapture. In *The Will to Power* the language is changed from that of early days, but the fundamental doctrine remains much the same : the Dionysian conquest of reality — even to the extent of the revival of Dionysus.

“ Our religion, morals and philosophy ”, says Nietzsche concisely, “ are decadent forms of man.—The counter-movement, *art*.”<sup>1</sup> All real art springs from a feeling of power : it is the overflowing of inward strength on to the objects of the world, so transforming them that they become expressions of it ! Artistic creation does *not* arise from weakness, or provide a refuge from reality : it comes forth in gratitude for the richness and power of the artist’s own experience. The artist belongs to a stronger race of man than normal, and his eccentricities do not have the morbid significance which they would have in lesser beings.

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 794.

The experience of power which art provides, involves, in Nietzsche's view, three dominant tendencies, sexuality, ecstasy and cruelty ; and his treatment of them shows what he demanded of art. " That making perfect, that seeing perfect, which belongs to a cerebral system overladen with sexual forces (the evening alone with the beloved, the smallest details transfigured, life a sequence of sublime things, ' the misfortune of an unhappy love affair of more value than anything else ' ) : on the other hand everything perfect and beautiful acts like an unconscious recollection of that state of love and its manner of seeing — all perfection, the entire beauty of things arouses aphrodisiac bliss again through contiguity. (Physiologically : the creating instinct of the artist and the distribution of semen in the blood. . . ) The longing for art and beauty is an indirect longing for the raptures of the sexual impulse, and is communicated to the brain. The world made perfect through ' love ' ."<sup>1</sup> The psychology rather than the physiology is of importance here.

There is an easy transition from sexual excitement to the more general upheaval, the intoxication, the rapture, and the sense of power which Nietzsche demands of art. Everyone knows, he says, what the ecstasy of love can do. " The muscular strength of a girl increases as soon as a man comes into her neighbourhood ; there are instruments ", Nietzsche avers, " to measure this. In still closer relationships of the sexes, such, e.g., as dancing and other social customs bring with them, this strength increases to such an extent that it makes feats of strength possible. . . . Dancing itself, like every very rapid movement, brings with it a kind of intoxicated rapture of the whole vascular, nervous and muscular system."<sup>2</sup> The world is transformed by the eyes of a lover, and the lover himself actually gains strength by his distortion and misrepresentation of things. " The lover becomes a spendthrift, he is rich enough for that. He is bold enough now, becomes an adventurer, becomes an ass in magnanimity and innocence ; he believes again in God, he believes in virtue, because he believes in love ; and on the other hand, for

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 805.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 807.

## ANTI-WAGNER

this idiot of happiness there grow new wings and new capacities, and even the door of art opens to him." He is then an artist, a disciple of Dionysus. The work of art, Nietzsche insists, appeals only to the man of proper sensibility : it "works as suggestion on the muscles and senses which are originally active in the naïvely artistic man ; it always speaks only to artists,—it speaks to those of this sort about the finer tremulous urgency of the body".<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate appeal, thus, of beauty and of the art which sets it forth, is to the muscles of the body, to movement. Of course, the whole body may be affected, for the appeal is fundamentally an emotional one, involving the viscera as well as the brain. "Let us take away from the tones and words of the lyric", he demands, "the suggestion of that intestinal fever : what is left of the lyric and music ? . . . *L'art pour l'art* perhaps ; the skilful croaking of shivering frogs, driven frantic in the cold of their swamp. All the rest love created."

In ecstasy the individual is lifted above ordinary things, he has the feeling of a great influx of strength, the world becomes luminous to him, and its strife falls away. The experience, Nietzsche holds, is an immediate one, involving no conscious inference from rational premises ; but in the history of the race it has been associated with life-giving, life-promoting tendencies, and this connection comes as an inheritance to later generations. The beautiful is the useful, the life-giving, measured by the accumulated judgment and experience of the past. In contrast with beauty, ugliness is associated with descending forms of life, with depression and weakness. "All art has a tonic effect, increasing strength, arousing pleasure [*i.e.* the feeling of power], exciting all the finer recollections of ecstasy. . . . Ugliness [*is*] the contradiction of art, that which is excluded by art, its *No.* . . . The ugly has a *depressing* effect, it is an utterance of a depression. It *takes away* strength, it impoverishes, it oppresses." Of course the truth itself can be, perhaps always must be, depressing : it is therefore ugly, and is not and cannot be an object of art.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 809.

## NIETZSCHE

Although Nietzsche lays great stress on the experience of ecstasy, springing from overflowing power, his account is nevertheless not free from hesitations and qualifications. The artist is a man of strong passions. "Artists, if they are worth anything (physically also), are strongly endowed, men with a surplus, powerful animals, sexual; without a certain overheating of the sexual system a Raphael cannot be thought of."<sup>1</sup> But he recognises that the symptoms which some artists display have a morbid look, suggesting eccentricity rather than strength; so he changes his mind. "Artists are *not* men of *great* passion, as they would pretend to us and to themselves."<sup>2</sup> For one thing, they exploit their passions, and for another they have to conserve their energy for their art and not spend it in riotous living. And, as if in conformity with this, Nietzsche, in spite of some contradictory declarations, insists on the great value of regularity, economy and convention in art, particularly in the framework within which the energy is expended. The grand style, and the tragedies of Racine, represent for him, in this mood, the highest forms of excellence. They give a disciplined rapture, more valuable than that of the sheer Bacchanalian rout.

The third element in artistic experience is cruelty; and although it tends in some degree to be present throughout, it is most clearly manifested in tragedy. Nietzsche's ultimate theory of tragedy is simple: the appreciation of the tragic play, as of tragedy in real life, depends on a delight in pain. It involves, we are told, a preference for questionable and terrible things — a symptom of strength, Nietzsche thinks, — without any redeeming faith or hope. "It is the *heroic* spirits which say Yes to themselves in tragic cruelty: they are hard enough to feel suffering as pleasure."<sup>3</sup>

This, of course, is the Dionysian attitude again; and Nietzsche's final solution of the world, the justification of things through art, is thus a renewed attempt to place himself on the vacant throne, and in voluptuous ecstatic pain to feel as if he were the source and master of life and reality. From this point

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 800.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 814.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* § 852.

of view he is almost willing to bring God to life again — as Dionysus. “ Let us banish the highest Good from the conception of God — it is unworthy of a God. Similarly let us banish the highest wisdom : — the vanity of philosophers is responsible for this absurdity of a monster of wisdom : he had to be as like them as possible. *No ! God the highest power* — that suffices ! From it there follows all, there follows — ‘ the world ’ ! ”<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche’s attitude here is not unequivocal, and underlying his treatment there are at least two different views, hardly reconcilable with one another. On the one hand, in agreement with the ordinary man, he admits that pain, suffering in general, is undesirable and evil, something to be explained away, an objection to life and a difficulty to the life-affirming spirit. But he meets the difficulty by maintaining that pain is an essential part of the whole, and cannot be removed without destroying life itself. This assertion he justifies apparently on two grounds ; viz. the general one that reality is a single necessary system which cannot be altered in any respect without complete annihilation, and the more particular one that pain and joy are correlatives, implying one another. Life as a whole is desirable, and since suffering is an integral part of it, in affirming life we are logically bound to accept also the pain which it includes and to affirm it along with the rest. Life, Nietzsche holds, is good enough and rich enough to carry this burden and to compensate for the pain it gives us.

On the other hand, he also sets forth a more ambitious view, one in accordance with the closing lines of Lou Salomé’s poem to Life, where life was assured of its complete desirability, being told : “ If thou hast no joy left to give me, well then thou hast thy sorrow still ”. From this point of view, which Nietzsche took in full seriousness, pain ceases to be an evil, and is affirmed, not grudgingly as something to be tolerated for the sake of something else beyond it, but for its own sake as good and enjoyable in itself. In the Dionysian ecstasy the transfigured reveller must delight in suffering, taking such pleasure in it

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* § 1037.

## NIETZSCHE

that life may be affirmed through and through without reserve. In Nietzsche's thought at the time of *The Birth of Tragedy* such a view was partly developed : Dionysus, the childish or brutish wanton god, felt his power in building and destroying, and his worshipper shared his raptures by ecstatic identification with him. Now, in the final period of his thought, the transvaluation period, Nietzsche seeks to revive Dionysus and set him back on his throne, for, as we have seen, he is prepared to admit sheer power to divine rank. He places the conscious worshipper on the broad seat of destiny beside the blind creator and destroyer of things, to revel consciously in the unconscious power lying at the heart of reality. To this end it is necessary that when pain is inflicted on others, cruelty must be an essential ingredient in the mind of the true worshipper. But this is not enough ; for there is not only the spectacle of pain in others to be enjoyed, there is also the experience of it in oneself. Accordingly, the Dionysian must raise himself to such a height of ecstasy that he enjoys his own pain, and takes pleasure in it also. Life may then be affirmed unreservedly.

Of course, the ordinary man will find this conception hard to realise, and a disgruntled philosopher may be inclined to maintain that Nietzsche's thought has come full circle. Suffering, he may object, is not really life-promoting but life-destroying, and in welcoming it the Dionysian, in another way, is affirming a negative, life-denying element just as really as the much reprobated Christian. And such a one as Schopenhauer, if he had had the opportunity, would undoubtedly have asked sardonically, whether you make a devil into a god by worshipping him. But Nietzsche would have swept all such criticism aside, for in the intoxication of rapture the Dionysian is raised for the moment above all strife, above all reality, into the harmony, insight and peace of a feeling of unearthly superhuman power.

Nietzsche states the final issue of his philosophy of life thus : " Dionysus versus ' the Crucified ' : there you have the opposition ". The ultimate difference, he alleges, is in the attitude to suffering ; whether a Christian or a tragic meaning is to be given



## ANTI-WAGNER

to it. "In the former case it is supposed to be the way to a holy existence, in the latter case existence is held to be holy enough to justify an enormous amount of suffering. The tragic man assents to the most bitter suffering: he is strong, full, deifying enough for this; the Christian denies even the happiest lot on earth: he is weak, poor, disinherited enough to suffer from life in every form. The God on the Cross is a curse on life, an indication to redeem one from him; — Dionysus, cut in pieces, is a *promise* of life: it will eternally be reborn and return home from destruction."<sup>1</sup>

Dionysus and the eternal recurrence, in Nietzsche's eyes, provide the god and immortality of the Superman.

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Power*, § 1052.

## XXXI

### ECCE HOMO

NIETZSCHE spent the winter of 1887-8 in Nice, on the whole in rather a gloomy state of mind. In the beginning of March, in reporting to his mother that things were going better, he said : " My condition has really improved and the evil weeks of melancholy have been overcome. . . . There are times when I am not master of myself and do things which are hardly conceivable whenever the sun begins to shine. The winter, moreover, has been hard and depressing for everyone : and particularly for such a delicate piece of machinery as I am." A week later he apologises to his sister for his ill-humour : " Now and again I lose control of myself ; and am almost the prey of gloomy resolutions. Do I perhaps suffer from gall ? " But he does not tell her that he was drafting *The Will to Power* and writing *The Case of Wagner*. " Year in year out, I have had to swallow too much that was bad, and I see myself looking backwards in vain for even one good experience." The strain on him, he says, is unendurable : " The feeling of being alone, the lack of love, the universal ingratitude and even baseness towards me . . ." His health is sound enough, he states, and his mind is in fair condition ; only his " dear soul " is ill ; and he tells his sister not to speak of his friends to him, for as the years went by they had become, with few possible exceptions, merely nominally friends.

His sister *had* been speaking of friends, even once again suggesting matrimony. Nietzsche would have none of it. " But now ", he wrote, " I must tell you of a small experience : as I was going for my usual walk yesterday, I suddenly heard in a side street someone talking and laughing warmly and heartily (it sounded almost as if you were there — ; ) and when someone

## ECCE HOMO

came into sight, it was a fascinating brown-eyed maiden, who looked at me as gently as a roe. Then a warmth came round the heart of this lonely philosopher — I thought of your marriage plans and during the whole of my walk could not get away from the thought of the sweet young maiden. Certainly, it would do me good to have one so fair around me — but would it be good for her? Would my views not make her unhappy? And would it not break my heart (granted that I loved her) to see such a dear being suffer? No, don't talk of marrying!" Nietzsche then explains that a cultured girl would not suit him either — one of the "higher" young ladies whom he was rejecting in his writings. She would really be foolish, he thinks, and would bore him; besides, she would probably not be very attractive.

But there were other ideas in Nietzsche's mind which he was not then prepared to reveal to anyone — ideas which even Carmen could not satisfy and which, clothing themselves in the language of classical myth, took the forms of Theseus, Ariadne and Dionysus.

In the plot of a drama, *Empedocles*, drawn up in 1870 or 1871, Nietzsche introduced Theseus and Ariadne in the third act, and at the end of the fifth act, after the tragedy, he asked: "Does Dionysus flee before Ariadne?" It is only a question, but it shows a preoccupation with the legend and a readiness to tamper with it.

The development of the story, however, took place at first on reasonably orthodox lines. Wagner, we have seen, was the Minotaur; Nietzsche, his conqueror, must therefore be Theseus, although he boasts that he requires no thread of an Ariadne. But this detachment did not last. The figure of Ariadne grew on him, leading him to assert in a note written during the time of Zarathustra, "A labyrinthine man never seeks the truth, but always only his Ariadne. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche, however, was not comfortable in the rôle of Theseus; even if it allowed him to slay the Minotaur, he was miscast in it. He was really Dionysus, and Dionysus plays a

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xiv, p. 22.

## NIETZSCHE

different part in the legend: Ariadne comes to him when Theseus deserts her in the island of Naxos. The necessary transformation, however, took place in Nietzsche's mind gradually. We see one stage of it in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where we are told that the philosopher-God once said: "'Under certain circumstances I love mankind' and alluded thereby to Ariadne, who was present — 'To me man is an agreeable brave venturesome animal, that has no equal on earth, he even finds his way through all labyrinths.'"<sup>1</sup> The reference here to Theseus glances patronisingly at Wagner rather than at Nietzsche, and the statement continues: "'I like him, I often think how I could bring him further forward, and make him stronger, more evil, and more profound'".

Nietzsche professes to be duly shocked by the Dionysian doctrine, but in another note written about the same time — the summer of 1885 — he transfers the task of protesting to Ariadne. After an exposition of his views on the superiority of the body and the secondary derivative nature of consciousness, Nietzsche exclaims: "Babbling thus, I gave free rein to my impulse to teach: for I was fortunate in having someone who endured listening to me. But just at this point Ariadne endured it no longer — the story took place during my first sojourn at Naxos — 'But Sir!' she said, 'You are talking pig-German.' 'German,' I answered good-humouredly. 'Simply German! Leave the pig out, my Goddess. You underestimate the difficulty of saying refined things in German!' 'Refined things,' cried Ariadne aghast: 'but it was only Positivism! A hodge-podge and excrement of ideas from a hundred philosophies! Where will that get you!' and at the same time she played impatiently with the famous thread which once guided Theseus through the labyrinth.— Thus it came to light that Ariadne was two thousand years behind in her philosophic development."<sup>2</sup>

The reference is clearly to the transitional time which led to *Human all too Human*, and the characters are easy to identify.

<sup>1</sup> *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 295.

<sup>2</sup> Works, vol. xvi, p. 278.

## ECCE HOMO

Ariadne is still on the side of Theseus : Cosima is with Wagner. Such a situation, however, could not be allowed to continue indefinitely, and Nietzsche revealed his need most poignantly in *Ecce Homo*. In the section on *Zarathustra* he quotes at length from the Night Song in the second part, voicing once again the despair into which he fell at Rome, after his sister had reclaimed him. "The like has never been written, nor felt, nor suffered. Only a God suffers thus, a Dionysus. The answer to such a dithyramb of sunlike solitude in light would be an Ariadne. . . . Who beyond myself knows what Ariadne is !"

So in 1887 we find the scene changed. Wagner has been dead for some two years, and Nietzsche not only identifies him with Theseus and himself with Dionysus, but also makes an important change in the legend. Theseus is not now allowed to desert Ariadne, but is rejected by her on account of his failure to adopt the immoralist Dionysian philosophy, and also for the contradictory reason that it was she who led him astray into the paths of virtue.

" 'Theseus grows absurd,' said Ariadne, 'Theseus becomes virtuous — !' (The hero admiring himself, becoming absurd.) Theseus's jealousy of Ariadne's dream. Dionysus without jealousy : 'How can a Theseus love what I love in thee ? One is not jealous when one is God ; unless it be of gods.'

'Ariadne,' said Dionysus, 'thou art a labyrinth : Theseus has gone astray in you, he no longer has a thread : what does it avail him now that he was not devoured by the Minotaur.' 'Thou flatterest me,' answered Ariadne, 'but I do not wish to pity when I love ; I am weary of my pity ; all heroes must perish in me. That is my last love towards Theseus : I cause him to perish.'

Last Act : Marriage of Dionysus and Ariadne."<sup>1</sup>

Of course, with such an idea as this Nietzsche must wear a mask, so that little of him may be seen. "Mrs. Wagner", he told his sister in May 1888, "is now called the 'Countess of Bayreuth' — a pretty jest, but I have all sorts of dismal hidden

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 427.

## NIETZSCHE

thoughts about it. How since the time of Tribschen they have made poor Wagner both worldly and Christian. Yes, indeed the women ! ” But masked and unrecognised, Nietzsche can venture a little into the open, so in *The Twilight of the Idols* we find : “ ‘ Oh Dionysus, Divine One, why dost thou pull my ears ? ’ asked Ariadne of her philosophic lover in the famous dialogues on Naxos. ‘ I find a kind of humour in thine ears, Ariadne : why are they not longer still ? ’ ”<sup>1</sup>

But Nietzsche’s thought and inner demand go deeper than this gentle dalliance : both the superiority and the submission must be made greater. So Nietzsche takes a further step. In the fourth part of *Zarathustra* he had placed in the mouth of “ the old magician ”, Wagner, a song which, in mockery of the religious tendency most explicit in *Parsifal*, expressed the mingled fear and love of the singer for the Unknown God. This song is now transferred, with a changed meaning, to Ariadne, becoming with her an appeal to a divine yet very human lover, and it is supplied with a new ending in which Dionysus reveals himself, triumphant and without a rival. It is now Ariadne who lies shivering and prostrate before the unknown tormentor whom she fears and to whom at the same time she is attracted and whose love she seeks. “ Unnameable,” she calls him, “ Hidden One, Dreadful One,” the “ Hunter behind the Clouds ”.

Thus I lie,  
I bow myself, I writhe, tormented  
by all eternal tortures,  
smitten  
by thee, most cruel hunter,  
thou unknown — God.

Yet she asks him to strike deeper and harder. When she feels his approach, she calls out in alarm :

Thou art torturing me, fool that thou art,  
thou art torturing my pride to pieces.

<sup>1</sup> Works, vol. xvii, p. 120.

## ECCE HOMO

She commands him to depart, then instantly repents :

Hence !  
He hath fled away,  
my comrade without peer,  
my mighty foe,  
my unknown one,  
my hangman-God ! . . .

No !  
come thou back !  
With all thy tortures !  
All my tears are running  
their course to thee,  
And from my heart th' expiring embers  
flame up to thee.  
Oh, come thou back  
my unknown God ! my pain !  
my final bliss ! . . .

*(A flash of lightning. Dionysus appears in emerald beauty.)*

### DIONYSUS

Be wise, Ariadne ! . . .  
Thou hast tiny ears, thou hast my ears :  
place a clever word in them !  
Must those who are to love, not first hate one another ? . . .  
*I am thy Labyrinth . . .*<sup>1</sup>

Of course it is all a poem, the development of a legend, and must not be taken too literally, but it cannot be neglected, and it presents in a mask Nietzsche's supreme conquest over Wagner, over Cosima, and over woman in general. Cosima was seven years older than he was, and probably an element of sexual attraction entered into his attitude to her ; she was also the helpmate of the great man, the helpmate he too required ; and in her he centred his desire and aspiration. He did not intend to approach her, he did not propose to marry her : she remained remote and ideal. But as an ideal she embodied for

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* vol. xx, pp. 207-10.

## NIETZSCHE

him perhaps half unconsciously, much that he had sought for and not found in reality.

Towards the end of his stay at Nice his health improved a little, and his headaches were less frequent and less severe, but in his letters he looked back in retrospect on a very dark existence. At one time he explains to his sister that he is far from being "cheerful", as she would have him be, and that he has to take care to avoid everything that would upset the equanimity of his spirit. At another, in apologising for some of his criticisms, he reminds her: "You do know, how quickly my moods change". One relief he had: he attended three of the productions of Offenbach, and with his new musical taste found them delightful. "Four or five times in each work", he told Peter Gast, "he reached a state of high-spirited buffoonery, but in the form of the classical taste, absolutely logical — and at the same time wonderfully Parisian."

At the beginning of April Nietzsche left Nice for Turin, and found that both the aspect of the town and the climate suited him. There he learned that Georg Brandes, one of the most renowned literary critics in Europe, was delivering a course of lectures on him in the University of Copenhagen. They were well attended, enthusiastically received, and gave him his first short glimpse of fame. "The lectures of my Copenhagen admirer", he wrote to his mother, "have come brilliantly to an end with a great ovation, which he accepted in my name. He writes to me, that 'my name is now popular in all intelligent circles in Copenhagen and is known in the whole of Scandinavia'." The dean of the University of Turin had also been very polite to him, and an article on him had appeared in a New York journal.

At the beginning of June he went to Sils-Maria again — for the last time. The journey upset him; his health gave way for a little, and he was very dismal for some time. One thing, however, served to cheer him. An unknown admirer — strangely enough, Nietzsche thought of Rée — made him a present of 2000 marks, through Deussen. Nietzsche did greatly need the money, and was content in the end to accept it to assist



in the publication of his works, for in the past he had been reduced to financing them himself. But the weather was bad, the company not so congenial as usual, and there was little to please him, except his own work. Towards the end of September he returned to Turin, and there gradually a change came over him. His dejection left him, his headaches diminished, he lost little or no time through illness, he could work at higher speed than ever before, and with greater success. The world itself became a more pleasant place — especially Turin — and even its inhabitants improved. Writing to Elizabeth, he told her what a wise person she was, and how invariably right in her judgments, her only fault being a modesty which prevented her from expressing her views as quickly and as forcibly as she might have done. Turin too was a wonderful place. "Thus I am back in *my* good city of Turin, this city which Gobineau also loved so much — probably it resembles us both. The distinguished and somewhat proud nature of these old Turiners also pleases me very much. No two things differ more than the good natured but *fundamentally vulgar* Leipzig and this Turin. Moreover, in all matters of importance there is a curious similarity of taste between us — the Turiners and me, not only in the build of the houses and the lay-out of the streets, but even in cookery." What a difference, he exclaims, there is between the miserable existence he had at Nice and his present condition. "Everywhere I am treated in the most distinguished way. You should only see how everybody here rejoices when I come, and how people of all ranks involuntarily display the best and most discreet part of their nature, and put on their politest and most amiable manners." Looking back, he finds a pleasant light shed even on the past : "But that has definitely been so not only here, but year in year out wherever I have been".— Except of course, among the Germans, who alone have treated him badly. He looks forward to a great programme of work : "I must make full use of the increase in my powers and of this wonderful autumn weather for my great mission. At this moment, when my life has reached its greatest height and tasks have to be performed, this almost

## NIETZSCHE

sudden return of strength and self-reliance is quite marvellous ! — In this golden autumn, the fairest I have ever experienced, I am writing a survey of my life, only for myself. No one shall read it, with the exception of a certain good Lama when she comes back across the sea to visit her brother.”

The reference in the passage just quoted is to *Ecce Homo*, one of the most remarkable autobiographies ever written. As the title suggests, it is a challenge to Christ, and a challenge to the Ephesian Gospel from which the words come, and it is thrown out in the interests of the gospel of that other Ephesian, Heraclitus, together with that of the god who came to Greece from Asia, Dionysus. “ Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man ! ” Nietzsche too was not without his crown of thorns, and he would fain wear the purple robe. But there was no Pilate to lead him forth — even in scorn — and proclaim his freedom from fault ; he had therefore to perform the ceremony himself.

The book begins with a preface, where in contrast with the modest concealment indicated in his letter to his sister, Nietzsche indicates the importance of letting the world know precisely who and what manner of man he is ; but then, after donning the mantle of Zarathustra and commending his wisdom, he concludes by quoting a passage, which we have already considered, and which is also reminiscent of the Gospels, warning his disciples against credulity, and bidding them leave him, to return only after they have denied him. Then follows a statement of the conditions under which the book is written :

“ On this perfect day, when everything is ripening and not only the grapes are getting brown, a ray of sunshine has fallen on my life : I look backwards, I look outwards, never did I see so many and so good things at once. Not in vain have I buried my forty-fourth year — what was life in it is saved, is immortal. The first book of *The Transvaluation of All Values*

## ECCE HOMO

[i.e. *The Antichrist*], *The Songs of Zarathustra*, *The Twilight of the Idols*, my attempt to philosophise with a hammer — all were gifts of this year, even of its last quarter ! Why should I not be thankful to my whole life ? — And so I am relating my life to myself."

The book itself is the most sustained self-glorification in literature. Nietzsche is convinced that he is just reaching the great noontide, the hour when all the old values will be overturned, and the tables of the new law set in their place. The old world is on the point of being destroyed : he is the destroyer of it and the architect of what will come thereafter. He must recount by what steps he reached this extraordinary position of eminence and power, and so he adds a sub-title, reminiscent of Schopenhauer, "How one becomes what one is".

There are four sections in the book, and their titles are self-explanatory. "Why I am so Wise" ; "Why I am so Clever" ; "Why I write Such Good Books" ; and "Why I am a Destiny". And, writing to these themes, in certain important respects Nietzsche never produced anything better from a literary point of view. Of course, *Ecce Homo* does not belong to the same class of writing as *Zarathustra*, and does not reach so high a level of poetic fancy and power ; yet there is much of *Zarathustra* in it, and for sheer force, continuity and artistic unity it stands above Nietzsche's other writings. The only one that can be compared with it is *The Antichrist*, but the advantage probably lies in the end with *Ecce Homo* ; it is less polemical, less bitter and is written more in consonance with a single enduring mood. Of course, Nietzsche's enemies are still there, and the enormity of their offence has to be indicated ; but he is so sure of victory, he is so nearly at the moment when triumph begins, that he can forgive them individually, forswear all resentment, and remember only the better side of their nature. He destroys the Christian virtues almost in a Christian spirit.

From a scientific point of view, however, the book wears a different aspect. We have seen how Nietzsche lamented at times in his early days the lack of scientific training, and he tells us in

## NIETZSCHE

*Ecce Homo* itself of the efforts he made from the time of *Human all too Human* to remedy this defect : " A really burning thirst laid hold of me : from then on I studied nothing more than physiology, medicine and natural science — and I returned even to the study of history itself only when my *task* drove me to do so ". Unfortunately Nietzsche never mastered the elements of science, and although he drags physiological statements into his exposition, they are almost always ludicrously wrong. Even in the psychological field, where he thought he was a master by nature, his capacity was limited. In some matters he was exceedingly acute : like an invalid, he was sensitive to faint odours and noises which the ordinary healthy human being passes over without notice, but he was just as little able to understand and cope with the whole world of men around him as the invalid is to adjust himself to his environment as a whole. Nietzsche noticed many of the little things, but missed some of the larger ones ; he had neither the training, nor the experience, nor the constitution to apprehend them. Nor did he even fully understand himself. All that lay on the surface he saw, and what was in the air, his ideals, was also within his field of vision, although at a safe distance, but what moved under the surface was unknown to him ; if it were in danger of appearing he covered it over with veils and masks. Thus his autobiography is a document of great value for the understanding of him, but it is not itself a reliable interpretation, and from a historical and psychological point of view must not be taken at its face value.

It is unnecessary to attempt to prove this statement here : this whole book is a proof of it, and the contradiction between Nietzsche's protestations and his actual feelings and behaviour as shown by the contemporary records is often glaring. It is not that he makes many mistakes of fact — the common failing of many autobiographies written in old age — although there are some errors of that kind ; the fundamental inaccuracy is one of mood. In *Ecce Homo* he is writing in the warm glow of an afternoon sun, looking at a landscape touched with a golden mist

## ECCE HOMO

which lets the profile of the mountains be seen, but hides their shadows, their clefts and their caves from his eyes. He reads into his own past life a serenity and a self-confidence which it did not have, and which only came to him momentarily at this late hour. He forgets the dejection, the pessimism, the revolt, the conflicts, the resentment, the failure, or touches on them only lightly to show how they all worked together for good to him. He remembers the ten days of ecstasy and forgets the months of gloom and despondency.

So too in thinking of others he remembers only, or mainly, the better side of his relations to them. "I lack the art of arousing ill-feeling against myself . . .", he says, "even when it seemed of great value to me." And equally does he lack a capacity for resentment. He admits, of course, that he retaliates when offended, but he will do so in what others would imagine was almost a Christian way. "If anyone does anything bad to me, I shall 'repay' it, you can be sure of that: before long I shall find an opportunity of expressing my thanks to the 'offender' (among other things even for the offence) — or of *asking* him for something, [an act] which can create greater obligation than giving something." One thinks of Wagner, Rée, Lou Salomé, to mention no others; and marvels at Nietzsche's memory.

Wagner in particular is enveloped in a rosy light. "I hold all my other human relationships lightly", Nietzsche says; "but at no price would I surrender those days of Tribschen from my life, days of trust, of cheerfulness, of sublime thoughts — of *profound* moments. . . . I do not know how others have got on with Wagner: over *our* sky no cloud ever passed."

Of course he remembers that he was, and is, a warrior, and thinks then of Strauss, and Wagner and Christianity. He prides himself on his skill and daring. "My method of waging war is apprehended under four propositions. Firstly: I only attack things which are victorious,—if circumstances require, I wait until they are victorious. Secondly, I only attack things when I cannot find allies, when I stand alone — when I compromise myself alone. . . . I have never taken a step in public which

## NIETZSCHE

did not compromise me : that is my criterion of right action." One thinks of his laments when he did arouse antagonism, and notes how quickly legends grow. "Thirdly," he goes on, "I do not attack persons,—I make use of the person only as a powerful magnifying glass, with which one can make a general but evasive and hardly perceptible state of distress visible. In this way I attacked David Strauss. . . . In this way I attacked Wagner. . . ." One thinks of the illiterate, cowardly Strauss and the illegitimate Jewish Wagner, and watches the legend still growing. "Fourthly," asserts Nietzsche, "I attack only things from which every personal difference is excluded, where there is no background of unpleasant experiences." One thinks of Naumburg, and contemplates the chivalrous warrior with a little scepticism.

There is one region, however, where Nietzsche's charity fails ; it is not extended to the Germans. Their offences were many. They had the doubtful virtue of good-humour, a quality which Nietzsche did not altogether approve of ; they had had the bad taste to refrain from appreciating Wagner when Nietzsche commended him, and to begin appreciating him when Nietzsche ceased to do so. They lived in a damp, cloudy country ; they were busy, industrious, occupied people, and had no place for him in their Universities ; their cookery was bad ; they liked beer ; their culture was a thing of shreds and patches, lacking all real unity and originality. Finally, and perhaps most conclusive of all, they did not pay attention to Zarathustra's message and did not buy Nietzsche's books. So Nietzsche repays them : although hardly in the way he had suggested. "It is even part of my ambition", he says, "to be recognised as the despiser of the Germans *par excellence*. . . . But the Germans are *canaille*. — Oh ! they are so good-humoured. . . . One lowers oneself by intercourse with the Germans : the German *treats people as equals*. . . . I cannot endure this race where one is always in bad company, which has no feeling for *nuances* — alas ! I am a *nuance*. . . . The Germans have not the least idea how vulgar they are ; but that is the superlative degree of vulgarity — they

## ECCE HOMO

are not even *ashamed* of being merely Germans." After some further discussion on these lines and after recounting his bad reception in Germany when other nations are beginning to recognise him, Nietzsche pulls himself up, recollecting that he must not be angry or resentful. "I myself have never suffered in all this; what is necessary does not injure me; *amor fati* is my inmost nature. This does preclude me, however, from loving irony, even the irony of world history. And so, some two years before the shattering lightning-stroke of the overturning of values, which will overthrow the earth in convulsions, I have sent *The Case of Wagner* forth into the world; the Germans ought once more to offend against me in undying fashion and immortalise themselves! They have still time to do it!—Has it been achieved? Charming!y, Messers the Germans! I present my compliments to you. . . ."

We need not consider in detail Nietzsche's account of his life and writings; for the most part the story is not new. But there are one or two features which deserve mention. When he explains why he is so wise, Nietzsche lays a good deal of the responsibility on his ancestry, not forgetting the Polish Count. But special prominence is given by him to his father, from whom he thinks he inherited not only his physical weakness and an element of decadence, but also the refinement of spirit which kept him free from petty personal passions and enabled him to rise out of his decadence to higher things. The snobbish and rather futile parson of Röcken has become in the eyes of his son the incomparable source of much of his own culture, indeed of everything except the tremendous urge to life and to the affirmation of life, which was the driving force behind all. Nietzsche's illness, of course, plays a part in the story; and Nietzsche recognised that he owed much to it. But how much he did not realise. It gave him, he thought, a sense of fatalism, an absence of resentment; for resentment was an exhausting emotion in which an invalid could not afford to indulge. It also gave him an understanding, he thought, of decadence, and forced him to recognise it in the world around him also. He did not

## NIETZSCHE

realise, however, how far his philosophy was a compensation for that illness, an idealisation in which he gave himself a part which he could not play in real life.

In the second section Nietzsche repeats a question to which a theological answer had been given in the days of his youth. "Isn't it funny," he had said to his little sister, when he was about thirteen years old, "isn't it funny that both of us learn so well and know so many things that other children do not know? . . . I always wonder . . . whether it is not possible that our dear Papa in Heaven is the cause of it." At the age of forty-four he repeats substantially the same question — but with the omission of Elizabeth. "Why do I know things more than others? Why am I so clever?" But the answer has changed. His father enters into it naturally rather than supernaturally, and for the rest the account is given in terms of diet, locality, climate, recreations and self-love. We need not discuss it: it is not an explanation, it is merely a history.

Nor need the third section detain us; although it is a masterly account of his writings, reinterpreted from a later point of view, but set forth with vigour and life and charm. We have already considered the subject-matter, and Nietzsche adds here little that is new to us. There remains the final short section: "Why I am a Destiny". There is no new doctrine here either; the old immoralism and anti-Christian polemic is continued, forcibly, concisely and clearly. But there is new confidence. In the address to the Germans quoted above there is an enigmatic passage, a prophecy that in some two years' time a shattering lightning-stroke will upset the world in convulsions. No explanation is given, although the anticipated publication of *The Will to Power* may be meant. In this last part prophecy appears again. Nietzsche is the man of destiny. "I contradict as has never been done before, and am nevertheless the opposite of a denying spirit. I am a *messenger of joy*, such as there never was, I am conscious of a task so lofty that the very idea of it was lacking until now: only from my time onwards do hopes arise again. In every way I am necessarily also the man of destiny. For when truth



## ECCE HOMO

enters into conflict with the lies of thousands of years, we shall have commotions, a convulsion of earthquakes, a confounding of mountain and valley, the like of which has never been dreamed of. The conception of politics then goes over wholly into a spiritual war, all the organisations of power in the old society are blown into the air — they all rest on lies : there will be wars, such as there have never been on earth. Only from my time on will there be *great politics* on the earth.” The old world, the Christian world, is coming to an end. “*Écrasez l’infâme !*” “Have you understood me ?” Nietzsche cries, “Dionysus against the Crucified . . .” There the book ends.

After the completion of it he turned again to Wagner for a moment. He was not quite sure that the old magician was really dead, so, as we have seen, he threw together some paragraphs from his old works and touched them up, to destroy him utterly and exorcise the ghost. On Christmas Day he completed this compilation, declaring that it was a book for psychologists and not for Germans. He was satisfied. To his mother he had written a few days before that he had succeeded in everything that his task demanded from him. “My health is really outstanding : the heaviest tasks, for which no human being hitherto has been strong enough, come easily to me. My old mother, at the end of the year receive my heartiest wishes and wish me myself a year, which, in every respect, will correspond to the great things I must do in it.” A new era, he thought, was about to dawn.

## XXXII

### DARKNESS

NIETZSCHE's activities during the few days after Christmas 1888 and during the first week of the next year are not known in any detail. The euphoria which had lifted him up and given him the feeling of power was continued and even intensified, but instead of being a sign and result of returning health as he supposed, it was the product of disease. As his sense of grandeur increased, his mind snapped and he became insane.

Apart from the general heightening of feeling which is noticeable in all his later works, and which in general is disproportionate to his circumstances, even when every allowance is made for his unusual theories, there were a few indications of the coming change. On 26th November he wrote to Peter Gast : " Also you will perhaps find in my ' Actuality ', which is fundamentally cheerful and malicious, more material for an ' operetta ' than elsewhere : I play so many silly pranks on myself and have such clownish ideas by myself that I go grinning — I know no other word for it — on the public streets for half an hour at a time. Recently I had the bright idea of introducing Malwida in a decisive passage of *Ecce Homo* as Kundry, who laughs. . . . For four days on end I lost the power of giving a settled seriousness to my face.

I think, in such a condition one is ripe to become the ' Redeemer of the World '."

On 2nd December he wrote to Gast again : " Just got back from a great concert, which has made the strongest impression on me of any in my life — my face was continually making grimaces in order to get over my extreme pleasure, including one tearful grimace lasting for ten minutes ".

On 28th December delusions of grandeur began to get hold

## DARKNESS

of him, although not completely. Thus, he wrote to Overbeck : " I myself am working on a memorial to the Courts of Europe for the purpose of instituting an Anti-German league. I wish to lace the ' Reich ' up in an iron shirt and provoke a war of desperation. My hands will not be free until I have the young Kaiser in my hands." Then, realising that this information was rather startling, he qualified it by saying that he had been writing in a bad light, adding : " Do you know that in my *external* circumstances I shall not alter at all during the next coming years, perhaps never. I may reach every degree of esteem, but I shall not give up my habits, nor my room at 25 francs. One must get accustomed to this sort of philosophy."

On the 31st, in reply to a postcard of Gast's, which contained nothing of much importance, he wrote : " Oh, friend ! *What* a moment ! — When your card came, *what* did I then do. . . . It was the famous Rubicon. . . .

My address I do not know any longer : let us suppose that it will next be the *Palazzo del Quirinale*."

Then on 4th January 1889 he sent a few lines on a card :

" To my *Maestro Pietro*.

Sing me a new song : the world is transfigured and all the heavens rejoice.

THE CRUCIFIED."

Gast replied with unconscious irony : " Great things must be happening with you ! Your enthusiasm, your sound health, and everything that you have done with ' pure body, consecrated sense ', or have let one guess you have done, must arouse the most sickly ; your health is infectious ; the epidemic of health which you once wished for, the epidemic of your health, can no longer fail to come."

Meanwhile Nietzsche had largely lost his orientation and even his sense of identity. To Strindberg, who had sent him one of his writings, he replied :

" DEAR SIR ! You will soon get to hear the answer to your short story — it will resound like the shot of a gun. I have

## NIETZSCHE

summoned a Council of Princes at Rome, I shall have the young Kaiser shot.— *Au revoir !* For we shall see one another again. *Une seule condition : Divorçons . . . Nietzsche Caesar.*"<sup>1</sup>

During this short period he sent out a number of other strange letters, some of which have been recovered. They were carefully inscribed on large sheets of special art paper, and signed in various ways. He wrote to the Pope, to the Papal Secretary and to the King of Italy, announcing his impending arrival in Rome, and signing himself again "The Crucified", a signature appended also to a note for the "House of Baden", advising it to have nothing to do with the "mad Hohenzollerns", even with such of them as were related to him ! Another set of notes bore the signature "Dionysus" ; Nietzsche had become the suffering god in both his main forms. As Dionysus he wrote to Overbeck and to Rohde, from whom he had been separated for several years. Burckhardt, with whom for long he had little real commerce, also received a Dionysian note :

"To my most honoured Jakob Burckhardt.

That was only a little joke, on account of which I overlook the tedium of having created a world. Now you are — thou art — our greatest teacher ; for I, together with Ariadne, have only to be the golden balance of all things, we have in every part those who are above us. . . .

DIONYSUS."<sup>2</sup>

And to Cosima Wagner, on another of the large sheets of grey paper, he sent these few words :

"Ariadne, I love Thee. DIONYSUS."

He wrote one letter, however, of greater length, signed with his own name : it was to Burckhardt, and reached him on 6th January. "Dear Professor," it begins, "In the end I would rather be a professor at Basle than God ; but I did not dare to press my private egoism so far as to abstain from the creation of the world." He tells where he is living, adding parenthetically

<sup>1</sup> Podach, *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 87 f.

## DARKNESS

that he was born as Victor Emmanuel, and goes on to describe his simple economical life. As a "bad joke" he declares his identity with two criminals, one of them a murderer, then occupying the attention of the Press. He states also that he is Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal — also in the public eye at the time. A little later he adds that he is fundamentally every name in history, and going on to particularise, states that he attended his own funeral twice during the autumn, once as Count Robilant and secondly as Antonelli. But he corrects himself, in view of gossip that the Count in question was a natural son of King Carlo Alberto : "No, he is my son, in so far as I am Carlo Alberto and untrue to my nature".

There are several appendices, written round the margins : they may be given in full.

"To-morrow my son Umberto is coming with the lovely Margherita, and I am receiving them in my shirt sleeves, just as I am receiving you."

Down the side of the first page he says : "You can make any use of this letter which will not lower me in the esteem of the people of Basle".

On another page he notes : "I go everywhere in my student coat, slap people here and there on the back and say *Siamo contenti ? Son dio ho fatto questa caricatura.*"

On a third margin we find the statement : "I have had Caiaphas put in chains ; and last year I was crucified in a long drawn-out way by the German doctors. Have abolished Wilhelm, Bismarck and all Anti-Semites."

Finally at the foot of the first page he wrote : "The rest is for Frau Cosima . . . Ariadne . . . there is magic from time to time . . ."

The letter explained itself to Burckhardt, and he hurried over with it to Overbeck, who normally was not counted among his associates. Overbeck wrote at once to Nietzsche, urging him to come to Basle. Next day, however, he received his own Dionysian letter ; so after consulting Dr. Wille, the head of the Basle Psychiatric Clinic, he set out at once for Turin. There things

## NIETZSCHE

had been going badly. On 3rd January, near the door of his lodgings, Nietzsche saw a cabman ill-using his horse. He threw his arms round the animal's neck and broke into tears. His landlord happened to pass at the time, and recognising Nietzsche in the gathering crowd, led him up to his room. There he lay motionless and silent on the sofa for a long time, and when he awoke he believed himself to be the double Godhead, Dionysus and the Crucified at once. In this capacity he soon reduced his landlord to despair, singing, shouting and playing the piano throughout the night, and gesticulating wildly when he went out into the street to post his letters. A doctor was summoned, the police informed, and an appeal made to the German Consul. When Overbeck arrived the whole of the landlord's family was present, and Nietzsche greeted him tempestuously. The landlord, however, gave him a sedative draught, after which Nietzsche calmed a little, talking pleasantly in grandiose fashion of the banquets and receptions which were being arranged in his honour. "Later he sat down at the piano, to accompany songs or fragments of his latest world of thought, with an occasional short passage, produced in indescribably muffled tones, sublime, wonderfully clear-sighted, as well as unspeakably dreadful things about himself as the successor of the dead God." But this attitude did not last, and his general demeanour was more in accordance with his rôle as "the buffoon of the new eternities, with accompanying scurrilous gestures, dances and leapings". The doctor who had seen him put in a report, stating that "the patient is generally excited, eats a great deal and is continually asking for food but is not in a state to do anything or look after himself, maintains that he is a famous man, is constantly asking for women.— Diagnosis, weakness of the brain."<sup>1</sup>

Overbeck obtained the assistance of a German dentist who had some psychiatric experience, to take the patient back with him to Basle. Under the influence of chloral Nietzsche slept during most of the journey, but when the train was rushing at night through the St. Gotthard Pass, he awoke and began to sing

<sup>1</sup> *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, p. 107.

## DARKNESS

to a strange melody a song which he had written for *Ecce Homo*, and which had expressed for him all the magic, not untouched with fear, of Venice and the South :

On the bridge of late  
I stood in dusky night.  
There came a song from afar :  
Welling in golden drops  
Across the quiv'ring sea it flowed.  
Gondolas, lights and music —  
Entrancement floated out into the dark . . .

My soul, a resounding string,  
Touched unseen, in my heart  
Sang unto me a gondola song,  
Quiv'ring from gleaming blessedness.  
— Did any hearken to me ?

On arrival at Basle Nietzsche was taken to a private nursing home of which Dr. Wille was in charge. He was very polite, regretted the rain, but promised to arrange good weather for the following day. One or two points in the medical record may be mentioned. "Pupils unequal, right larger than the left, reaction sluggish. Convergent strabismus — acute myopia. Tongue heavily furred ; no deviation, no tremor. Facial innervation little disturbed. . . . Exaggerated patellar reflex. . . . No real consciousness of illness, feels uncommonly well and uplifted. Admits that he has been ill for a week and has often suffered from severe headaches. He has had a few attacks, during which patient has felt uncommonly well and uplifted, he would have liked to embrace and kiss all the people in the street and would like to have climbed up the walls."<sup>1</sup> His attention wandered and it was difficult to get rational answers from him. He was put to bed, and in the afternoon kept up a continual confused talking, varied by screaming and incoherent shouting. He stated, however, that he had "infected himself [*i.e.* exposed himself to syphilitic infection] on two occasions".

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109.

## NIETZSCHE

Later, at Jena, a date was added to this — 1866, when he was a student at Leipzig.

On the 13th his mother arrived to claim him. She saw him next morning and he welcomed her heartily, talking quite sensibly for a long time about family affairs ; then suddenly he called out : " Behold in me the Tyrant of Turin ! " and the interview had to be cut short. His mother was determined to take him away with her, and, with some reluctance on the part of Overbeck and the hospital authorities, he was allowed to go to Jena. Overbeck made the arrangements, securing the services of a doctor and an attendant to accompany him, as well as his mother. During the few days before he left his condition remained without much change, except for a slight increase in the paralysis of the left facial muscle, and Wille himself wrote the diagnosis in his records : " Progressive paralysis ".

During the journey there was one untoward incident ; Nietzsche broke into a fit of rage against his mother, and she had to remain out of the compartment after that.

In Jena he was put under the charge of Binswanger, the head of the mental hospital. The record of syphilitic infection was repeated, and the diagnosis made of " a paralytic psychic disturbance ".

This is not a medical treatise and we need not dwell in detail on the progress and symptoms of the disease. Only a few points are of interest. Sometimes Nietzsche was very ceremonious in his behaviour — in this way resembling Hölderlin after his breakdown — bowing frequently in a very polite fashion, entering a room with majestic strides, and thanking his attendants for a magnificent reception. At other times he was seized with maniacal rage and screamed without obvious motive.

At first his mother had to be kept away from him, but as time went on he calmed down, and was allowed to go for regular walks with her. The dementia gradually increased as the delusions of grandeur and false identifications diminished. But as late as the end of March he remarked, " My wife Cosima Wagner brought me here."



## DARKNESS

There was one interlude, when a man with an extraordinary literary reputation, called Langbehn, tried to get control of affairs, declaring that he could cure him. Nietzsche's mother was anxious to accept his help, but Overbeck intervened and Nietzsche remained under Binswanger's charge.

Nietzsche retained his musical perception and ability longer than any other faculty, and for some considerable time he was able to play on the piano and improvise — even to the satisfaction of Peter Gast.

At the beginning of 1890 Nietzsche's mother moved from Naumburg to a flat in Jena to be near her son, and when on 24th March he received a permit to leave the hospital, she took him home there.

We may take our picture of him from the sympathetic hand of his friend Paul Deussen. "The next time I saw him again was in 1889, soon after he was taken ill. His mother, 'the little silly', as he used to call her affectionately, who took him for a walk every day, was at the railway station with him to meet me and my wife. On the way home I took him familiarly by the arm, and he was pleased, but he did not recognise me. I brought the conversation round to Schopenhauer, and he was able to say in the tone of one uttering the most profound truth: 'Arthur Schopenhauer was born in Danzig'. I told him about Spain, which I had visited the year before with my wife. 'Spain!' he cried, becoming animated, 'Deussen was there!' 'Yes, but I am Deussen,' I replied. He stared at me and could not grasp it. . . . His interests had become again those of a child; he looked for a long time at a boy with a drum, and the locomotive caught his attention as it moved back and forward. At home he sat mostly on a sunny vine-covered veranda, sunk in silent brooding, occasionally talking to himself in a confused way, often about people and affairs of Schulpforta.

I next saw him on his fiftieth birthday on 15th October 1894. I came early as I had to leave soon. His mother brought him in, I wished him happiness, told him that he was fifty years old to-day, and gave him a bunch of flowers. Of this he understood

## NIETZSCHE

nothing. Only the flowers seemed for a moment to arouse his participation, then they too lay there unheeded."<sup>1</sup>

In 1893, when his sister returned from Paraguay after the demise of her husband, she wished to take charge of Nietzsche; but his mother maintained her right until her death in 1897. Then Elizabeth took a place at Weimar where she could house her brother, together with all his books, manuscripts, notes,— every relic, published and unpublished, that piety had preserved or diligence could gather. And there he lived in a treasure-house of recollection, amid the evidences of his growing fame, unconscious of it all. Hour after hour he would sit on the veranda in fine weather, looking out with vacant eyes, content, vegetating, seeing nothing, willing nothing — utterly powerless.

He died on 25th August 1900, and was buried in the small churchyard at Röcken, beside his father. His funeral oration was delivered by Peter Gast, the most faithful of all the disciples — perhaps the only one who had a full right to the title. It concluded: "Peace be with thy ashes! Holy be thy name to all future generations!"

<sup>1</sup> *Erinnerungen*, p. 96.

THE END



